



# The BEST FACTS: Apologetics for Every Believer

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“But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord.  
Always be prepared to give an answer to  
everyone who asks you to give the reason  
for the hope that you have. But do this with  
gentleness and respect”

1 Peter 3:15

# Endorsements

This book simplifies apologetics in a succinct and memorable way that allows anyone to understand the overwhelming evidence we have for God's existence and the inspiration of His Word, the Bible.

**Josh D. McDowell**  
**Evangelist, Author, and Apologist**

Do you wonder what to say in presenting the Gospel facts? Or perhaps you are concerned about a difficult objection? The Best Facts is a helpful volume to assist believers in doing precisely these things-- both utilizing good support for Christianity as well as addressing those common objections. Both explanations as well as easy-to-learn lists of talking points in the appendices allow quick recall. Witnessing with confidence is the goal here and this text has done the hard work for you.

**Gary R. Habermas. Ph.D.**  
**Author, Apologist, and Distinguished Professor of  
Philosophy and Theology at Liberty University**

Do you ever feel flustered in a conversation with someone about the evidence for Christianity? You can't remember what you've read well enough to share it? Well, then you need to get the BEST FACTS right now because it not only brilliantly shares the essential evidence you need to know, but it does so in a very memorable way. Get this book right now and you'll become a better ambassador for Christ almost immediately!

**Frank Turek, Ph.D.**  
**Author, Apologist, and President**  
**of CrossExamined.org**

The BEST FACTS is a wonderful resource for Christians who want to learn how to share their faith with confidence. This workbook is packed full of helpful information presented in a manner for easier recall. Recommended.

**Michael Licona, Ph.D.**  
**Author, Apologist, and Associate Professor of**  
**Theology at Houston Baptist University**

If you want a condensed, deep-dive into apologetics, The BEST FACTS is it. You will become a stronger witness and more mature disciple as you read this. And it definitely will multiply your effectiveness and fruitfulness for Christ!

**Tom Elie**  
**Author, Evangelist, and President of**  
**Oasis World Ministries**

# The BEST FACTS: Apologetics for Every Believer

## How to Use this Resource

The BEST FACTS and TALL TALES acronyms were designed to help you memorize a comprehensive, cumulative, and coherent defense of your faith. The BEST FACTS workbook will equip you to silence doubt, support struggling believers, and answer honest questions from non-believers. This workbook can be worked on in individual, one-on-one, and small group settings. We encourage you to take notes in the page margins, answer the reflection questions, and commit the acronyms and arguments to memory!

This workbook is intentionally broad and basic. We hope you'll read the books suggested in each chapter to learn more about each of these important topics. This book will provide you an initial glimpse into Christian apologetics but there is so much more to learn as well.

We encourage you to pair the workbook with the BEST FACTS video series, which is available on the Great Commission Alliance Media channel on YouTube and at [thebestfacts.com/videos](http://thebestfacts.com/videos). There are videos for the chapters and appendices in this workbook and fill-in-the-blank notes you can print and use as well. If you are going through this resource with a small group, you could watch each chapter's video at the start of your meetings. If you are going through this on your own, you can watch each video before you go through a chapter. You will be encouraged!

In addition to the workbook and video series, we have a BEST FACTS tract, which was designed specifically for skeptics. This is a great tool that you can use with unbelieving friends. It is colorful and engaging, thoughtful and informative. It gently guides people through the BEST FACTS evidence to a point of decision. You can get the BEST FACTS tract at [greatcommissionalliance.org/shop](http://greatcommissionalliance.org/shop).

We hope you will use what you learn in this workbook to share and defend your faith. We also want to remind you to do that in a gentle and caring way. Don't use these arguments to beat someone over the head. Be careful to encourage people in a Christ-like way.

We hope this workbook and accompanying resources greatly encourage you!

- The GCA resource team

## Dedication

### **Josh McDowell**

Josh McDowell became convinced of the truth of the Christian faith after a careful evaluation of the evidence for Christianity. He rejected atheism and became a world-renowned defender of the Christian faith. He has spoken to tens of millions of people and his books have sold tens of millions of copies. Josh's life stands as a testament to both the truth and power of the gospel.

On a more personal note, Josh's work was instrumental in this author's personal faith journey. Josh's books were a great encouragement during many times of doubt earlier in life. Josh's ministry has been life-changing on a personal level and has been a great influence on this ministry.

Thank you Josh for your example and ministry!

*"After I set out to refute Christianity intellectually and couldn't, I came to the conclusion the Bible was true and Jesus Christ was God's Son." - Josh McDowell*

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# Preface

Thank you so much for picking up this workbook. The BEST FACTS is a basic introduction to defending your faith, what is known as Christian apologetics. This material will be fun to learn and easy to understand and remember. It will equip you to deal with doubt and defend your faith.

So many Christians are unprepared for the questions skeptical friends might ask. Having the right answer at the right time can be a game-changer. There are countless other good apologetical resources but this workbook is unique. The first ten apologetics books on my bookshelf average 512 pages each! They use big words many doctoral students might not understand. There's nothing wrong with that; we just wanted to simplify things for you.

The BEST FACTS is different. It is short, simple, and comprehensive. It gives you a cumulative, easy to remember, and coherent defense of the Christian faith. Most of the content in this book is not new. The evidence and arguments you read here are well established facts. We just put them into a format that is easy to understand and remember.

You can also get the companion video training series free at [greatcommissionalliance.org](http://greatcommissionalliance.org). This training will equip you with an easy to remember set of acronyms, the BEST FACTS, and TALL TALES, that will enable you to deal with doubt and defend your faith.

As you learn the evidence for your faith, we want to encourage you not to neglect the other parts of your walk with God. Jesus is more than a math equation or logical argument. He is your living Savior. Grow close to Him, enjoy Him, and share your faith in Him with others.

On that note, please remember that apologetics is a tool in evangelism but it doesn't take the

place of evangelism. Share your faith. Tell people your testimony (see Appendix A for more on that). Be ready to answer questions when they come up but also remember many people will be ready to respond to the gospel without a whole lot of apologetics. Apologetics can be a helpful tool in evangelism but don't let it complicate your witness!

We hope you'll memorize these acronyms and arguments and use what you learn in this book to confidently deal with doubt and respectfully defend your faith. Thanks so much for reading this book!

Nate Herbst, 9/9/20



## 5 Keys to Apologetics

1 Peter 3:15 says, “But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect...” This verse gives us five keys for defending our faith. These are 1) Relinquish control, 2) Resolve to be a light, 3) Ready yourself, 4) Reach out, and 5) Respect those you share with. Let’s briefly consider each of those below.

The first key is to relinquish control. Part of setting apart Christ as Lord includes making ourselves available to “go and make disciples of all nations,” as He has commanded (Matt. 28:19). We can’t say no to our Lord!

**Q:** How do you need to relinquish control so God can use you?

The second key is to resolve to be a light. Part of following Christ as Lord includes allowing Him to shine through us (Matt. 5:14-16). We must resolve to be a light that shines brightly in this dark world. Learn about sharing your faith in appendix A.

The third key is to ready ourselves. We’re told to “always be prepared.” God calls us to be ambassadors who persuade people of the truth of the Gospel (2 Cor. 5:11-21). Paul “persuaded” people to follow Christ in Thessalonica, Athens, Corinth, Ephesus, Caesarea, and Rome (Acts 17:2, 4, 17, 18:4, 19, 19:26, 24:25, 28:23). We must ready ourselves to do the same. The BEST FACTS and TALL TALES acronyms will equip you for this.

**Q:** How do you need to grow in the area of apologetics?

The fourth key is to reach out. We must give an answer to everyone who asks about our hope. They won't ask if they don't know we have hope. We must take the initiative to reach out and then be ready for any questions they may ask.

The fifth key is to respect those we share with. Jesus had compassion for the lost (Matt. 9:36). Never win an argument at the expense of a soul. We must respect those we share with out of reverence for Christ.

## Handling Disagreements

When you talk about truth, faith, and salvation, you will encounter disagreements. That's inevitable. Handle these with gentleness, kindness, and respect. Gregory Koukl reminds us, "Jesus' teaching made some people furious. Just make sure it's your ideas that offend and not you, that your beliefs cause the dispute and not your behavior... Remember, if anyone gets mad, you lose, so it's good to avoid quarrels."<sup>1</sup>

## The BEST acronym

The BEST acronym describes some of the evidence for God's existence and the life, ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus. These four arguments should be the core essence of your apologetical approach. Keep these four your focus!

## Key concept



It's easier to confirm something than to disprove it. For example, to confirm Abraham Lincoln existed, all you would need would be an eyewitness account, a picture, a signed document, or some other piece of evidence. To disprove his existence, you would need to know everything from that time. You would also need to disprove all the evidence for him, an impossible task. Disproving God is actually a logical fallacy called proving a negative. No

atheist knows everything about everything so no atheist can disprove God. All you need to support your faith is some evidence. Your testimony, the arguments in this book, or some other evidence would work.

**B** – The beginning of the universe points to God. Traditionally, this has been called the “Cosmological Argument” for God’s existence. Logic and science tell us the universe had a supernatural beginning. Some might call it the “Big Bang” but we know it’s what the Bible calls creation.

**E** – The Engineering of the universe points to God. This is known as the “Teleological (teh·lee·ow·laa·juh·kl) Argument” for God’s existence. The “fine-tuning” of the universe is evidence of an all-powerful and good Creator.

**S** – Standards and morality point to God. This is called the “Moral Argument.” Some things, like love, are really right, and others, like hate, are really wrong. These facts point to God. We’ll address the problem of evil in appendix B.

**T** – The Truth about Jesus points to God. The Gospel accounts are trustworthy and historical and the evidence for Jesus’ life, ministry, death, and resurrection is irrefutable. The truth about Jesus points us to God.

## The FACTS acronym

The FACTS acronym will help you remember some of the evidence that confirms why you can trust the Bible. Keep these secondary to the BEST arguments.

**F** – The Bible Foretells the future. Hundreds of biblical prophecies have been accurately fulfilled and Jesus alone fulfilled more than 100 prophecies.

**A** – The Bible is Archaeologically accurate. Hundreds of archaeological findings have supported the historical accuracy of God’s Word. You can trust the Bible.

**C** – The Bible is Coherent. The Bible corresponds with reality. It also gives us true hope in a world that desperately needs it.

**T** – The Bible has been Transmitted correctly. The New Testament is the most reliable ancient text. There are many translations of the Bible that we can trust.

**S** – The Bible has Scientifically statements. The Bible is not a science textbook, but it has numerous statements that have been confirmed by science.

**Q:** Which of the BEST FACTS arguments stands out to you?

## The Skeptic's Smokescreen

Atheists often promote the myth that Christianity is unintellectual. They insist atheism is logical and scientific and that Christians are ignorant and unaware. That's a smokescreen. There is a wealth of evidence for our faith!

## Convinced!



Dr. Frank Turek became convinced of the evidence for Christianity after reading Josh McDowell's book *Evidence that Demands a Verdict*. Since that time, he has taken very bold and courageous stands for his faith and has become a respected author, speaker, and Christian apologist. His books, website, TV show, and other resources have impacted millions of people around the globe. His ministry, Cross Examined ([crossexamined.org](http://crossexamined.org)), is committed to equipping Christians to defend their faith.

## Notes to Remember

Ask good questions and listen carefully. Watch out for bad arguments and avoid using them as well. Don't wing it; study! The appendices will help you address common objections. Be positive. Positive apologetics involves defending your faith

(the BEST FACTS) and negative apologetics involves refuting other worldviews (we'll discuss the TALL TALES later). Both are useful in different times and places. Try to keep at least 80% of your approach on the positive side of this spectrum. Always be respectful.

## Talking Points

Don't get sidetracked by minor issues. For example, instead of debating the age of the universe, talk about the beginning of the universe. Seminary professor and theologian Dr. Wayne Grudem reminds us that the evidence for a Creator is much stronger than the evidence for a young earth; he encourages us to focus on defending the beginning of the universe rather than less persuasive arguments about a younger age.<sup>2</sup> He reminds us that Bible-believing Christians hold very different perspectives on the age of the universe and we should never allow those differences to divide us or poison our attitudes towards each other. Good advice! You can find more on this specific topic in appendix C.

## Dealing with Doubt

God is patient with us in our doubt. Remember how Jesus treated his doubting disciple Thomas (Jn. 20:24-29). Timothy Keller shares the following analogy that is sure to encourage you: "Imagine you are on a high cliff and you lose your footing and begin to fall. Just beside you is a branch sticking out of the edge of the cliff ... If you're certain the branch can support you, but you don't actually reach out and grab it, you are lost. If instead your mind is filled with doubts and uncertainty that the branch can hold you, but you reach out and grab it anyway, you will be saved. Why? It is not the strength of your faith but the object of your faith that actually saves you. Strong faith in a weak branch is fatally inferior to weak faith in a strong branch."<sup>3</sup> Trust Jesus; He will guide you through any doubts you have.

## Conclusion

This workbook will help you silence doubts and answer good questions. It will cover a few main arguments, but there are countless more, not to mention the





# 2 THE BEGINNING OF THE UNIVERSE

## **B – The Beginning of the Universe Points to God.**

Jesus claimed that God created the universe and everything in it (Mk. 10:6, 13:19). Scripture also claims that Jesus is Creator God (Jn. 1:1-3, 14, Col. 1:16). It took science another two millennia to confirm that the universe had to have a cause. The Bible got this one right long ago!

The beginning of the universe is the “B” in the BEST FACTS acronym. This argument has traditionally been called the cosmological argument for God’s existence. Logic and science both confirm that the universe began out of nothing a finite time ago; that requires a supernatural cause. Some might call it the “Big Bang” but we know it’s what the Bible calls creation. The beginning of the universe points us to God and it is solid evidence for God’s existence.

**Q:** Before we go any further, does the idea that the beginning of the universe requires a Creator make sense to you? Why or why not?

# The Value of Logical Arguments

We can know a lot about the universe by constructing logical arguments based on core facts. If the premises of a logical argument cannot be refuted and if the argument based on those premises is valid, we can be certain the conclusion is true. We'll refer to logical arguments for God's existence in this lesson and the next two. We believe these arguments are valid and we can be confident that they provide compelling evidence for God.

***The Kalam cosmological argument*** (as stated by Dr. William Lane Craig<sup>1</sup>):

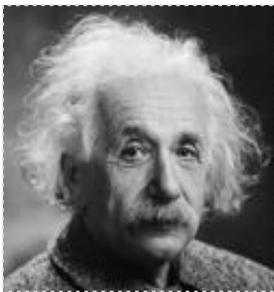
Premise 1: Everything that begins to exist has a cause of its existence.

Premise 2: The universe began to exist.

Conclusion: Therefore, the universe has a cause of its existence.

The Kalam cosmological argument is logically solid. The argument is valid and the premises cannot be reasonably refuted.

## Convinced!



Over the years, evidence and logic have convinced many intelligent people of God's existence. Einstein's work on Relativity convinced him that the universe had a beginning. Aware of the metaphysical implications of that, he tried to ignore his own findings, later calling it the biggest blunder of his career.<sup>2</sup> Although he never became a Christian, as far as we know, he did come to acknowledge the existence of a God, what he called, "a superior reasoning power, which is revealed in the incomprehensible universe..." and an "illimitable superior spirit who reveals himself in the slight details we are able to perceive."<sup>3</sup> The beginning of the universe convinced Einstein of a Creator. It is compelling evidence for God.



## The Skeptic's Smokescreen

Since the atheist can't refute these premises, they often try to turn the tables by asking, "who made God." The cosmological argument states that "anything that begins to exist must have a cause," not that "everything must have a cause." The material and temporal universe we live in had a beginning and that requires an immaterial and eternal cause; God.

Sometimes atheists accuse us of believing in a "God of the gaps." They say we just make up the idea of God for every gap in scientific knowledge. They're wrong. We don't believe in God because of what we don't know about science, we believe science confirms that time, matter, and the universe had a beginning that could not have caused themselves. Many apologists have noted that it is the atheists who are appealing to the "science of the gaps," a blind faith that science will someday show the opposite of what it has shown us is true today.

## Key concept

The universe had a supernatural beginning a finite time ago.

The redshift of light from distant galaxies, cosmic microwave background radiation, gravitational waves, and other scientific data confirm a beginning. These facts point to a self-existent, immaterial, eternal, powerful, intelligent, and personal cause. These are the very attributes the Bible ascribes to God!

Agnostic Robert Jastrow, founding director of NASA's Goddard Institute for Space Studies, agreed, writing, "For the scientist who has lived by his faith in the power of reason, the story ends like a bad dream. He has scaled the mountains of ignorance; he is about to conquer the highest peak; as he pulls himself over the final rock he is greeted by a band of theologians who have been sitting there for centuries."<sup>6</sup> The beginning of the universe points us to God.

## Important Term

*Empirical:* Something that is determined scientifically, through testing and observing the physical universe.

## Important Term

**Entropy:** A simple explanation of entropy is the amount of disorder or randomness in a system. There are more complex scientific definitions.

## Don't Get Confused About Entropy

You can think of entropy as disorder in the universe. Entropy always increases across closed systems, like the universe, not necessarily in open ones, like the earth. Don't use entropy to disprove evolution (there are better ways to do that). Do use it to argue for the beginning of the universe. Since entropy has not reached infinity, we know the universe is not eternal!



Think of entropy like the “E” on your car’s gas gauge. The longer you drive the closer you get to empty. As long as you’re not on “E,” you can be certain you haven’t been driving forever. Similarly, since we haven’t reached total “E,” or entropy, in the universe, we know the universe has not been here forever either.

## Talking Points

The “Big Bang” is a term renowned astronomer Fred Hoyle coined in derision as he sought to refute the scientific evidence for the beginning of the universe (he knew that if the universe had a beginning atheism would not be possible). The term stuck and the Big Bang has been the name scientists have used for the beginning of the universe ever since. The Big Bang does not refute the existence of God or the truth of creation.

Dr. John Lennox explains, “...the Big Bang is not an explanation at all. It is simply a label saying there was a beginning. It says nothing about how the universe came to exist in the first place. The Bible is giving a reason for the existence of the universe. God created it: there was a beginning caused by God, and if some people wish to label that beginning the Big Bang, that is fine. It was a Big Bang caused by God.”<sup>7</sup>

As Christians, we believe God created the universe. Instead of fighting people over the Big Bang, use it as a point of common ground to begin a discussion. Use the

Big Bang as a transition to the cosmological argument for God's existence. The concept of the Big Bang is simply an admission of a beginning and that requires a cause greater than itself.

**Q:** How could you transition a conversation about the Big Bang back to God?

## Handling Disagreements

When discussing creation, avoid debatable topics, like the earth's age, and stay focused like a laser beam on irrefutable ones, like the beginning of the universe.

## Conclusion

The Kalam cosmological argument for God's existence is convincing evidence for a self-existent, eternal, immaterial, omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent, omnibenevolent, intelligent, and personal Creator. This argument is logically valid and it is supported by science as well. You can use this argument to demonstrate the existence of God and you can remind yourself of it when you face doubt. Believing in God is both rational and reasonable.

**Q:** Review the BEST FACTS and TALL TALES acronyms. Write them out in the margins and practice memorizing them.

**Q:** What are your top takeaways from this chapter?





# 3 THE ENGINEERING OF THE UNIVERSE

## **E – The Engineering of the Universe Points to God.**

Jesus taught that God is intimately involved in maintaining the universe He created (Matt. 6:25-30, Mk. 10:6, 13:19, Lk. 12:24-28). The universe has been meticulously designed. The engineering of our universe points to God.

The universe is full of information and design and there are countless constants and parameters in the universe that must be exactly right for life to be possible. This “fine-tuning” is evidence of a Creator. The design argument makes a compelling case for God’s existence.

***The Design Argument*** (as stated by Dr. William Lane Craig<sup>1</sup>):

Premise 1: The universe is either the product of chance, necessity, or design.

Premise 2: The universe is not the product of chance.

Premise 3: The universe is not the product of necessity.

Conclusion: The universe is the product of design.

The design argument is logically solid. The argument is valid and the premises cannot be reasonably refuted.

## Convinced!



Over the years, the design argument has convinced many intelligent people of God's existence. Before he died, Antony Flew, who was known as the world's most notorious atheist, came to believe in God's existence because of the design argument for God. He was particularly struck by the engineering apparent in biological systems.

To refute this argument the atheist must refute one of the premises.

Let's consider premise #1, which states, "The universe is either the product of chance, necessity, or design."

This is obvious and can't be easily refuted.

Premise #2 states, "The universe is not the product of chance."

To refute this, the atheist has to demonstrate the statistical probability of the universe. That is absolutely impossible. Most atheists bend over backwards to get out of the statistics involved here (more on that soon).

Premise #3 continues, "The universe is not the product of necessity."

To refute this, the atheist would have to provide a natural cause for natural laws and a description of how those natural laws alone could have caused this universe. This is another impossible task.

Because they can't refute the premises, the conclusion stands: The universe is the product of design.



Here are just a few examples. Earth is perfectly located in the only possible intersection of all nine habitable zones.<sup>2</sup> The distance between stars, the magnetic field, the axial tilt, the oxygen to nitrogen ratio in the atmosphere, the atmospheric electric discharge rate, seismic activity, the mass of the universe, the stability of the proton, the fine structure constants, the velocity of light, the weak nuclear force coupling constant, and many other features are just right.<sup>3</sup> Life would not exist if the neutron's size was any different or if the strength of either the strong nuclear force or the electromagnetic force was any different.<sup>4</sup>

Many examples defy statistics. We'll just look at a few. If you're not too comfortable with statistics, don't worry. The numbers below just confirm there is no statistically possible way the design we see is an accident!

Life could not exist if the gravitational constant was off by 1 in  $10^{60}$ .<sup>1</sup> For perspective, there have not even been 1060 seconds since time began. Life could not exist if the expansion rate was off by 1 in  $10^{120}$ .<sup>1</sup> The mass and energy of the early universe had to be evenly distributed to a precision of 1 in  $10^{10,123}$ .<sup>1</sup> Statistically, there is no natural reason we should be here.

The problem of statistics applies to the origin of life as well. Even if all the correct organic molecules were formed in the same place and at the same time, there is no way they would connect correctly to form even the most basic features necessary for life. The probability of getting all the components of the simplest imaginable cell to align has been calculated at 1 in  $10^{112,827}$ .<sup>5</sup> That's the same as winning 16,119 state lotteries in a row with only one ticket each.<sup>5</sup> And even if these parts aligned, the cell wouldn't be alive!

## The Problem for the Atheist

William Dembski has proposed a universal probability bound of  $10^{-150}$ .<sup>6</sup> This means that anything outside of this would literally be statistically impossible. In 2001, the odds that "any given planet in the universe would possess the necessary

conditions to support intelligent physical life” were calculated at “less than one in a number so large it might as well be infinity ( $10^{173}$ ).”<sup>7</sup> Robin Collins summarizes all of this stating, “The bottom line is that the universe is at least ten billion orders of magnitude (a factor of  $10^{10,000,000,000}$  times) too small or too young for life to have assembled itself by natural processes.”<sup>3</sup>

**Q:** Why do you think it is wrong for the atheist to ignore statistics like these?

## The Skeptic’s Smokescreen

Because of these statistics, many atheists and skeptics appeal to a hypothetical multiverse, claiming that in an infinite number of universes statistics would not matter. With that kind of logic Dawkins can naively appeal to luck.<sup>8</sup> That isn’t scientific or logical.

Many scientists are more intellectually honest than atheists like Dawkins. Skeptical astronomer Fred Hoyle has a better answer: “A common-sense interpretation of the facts suggests that a super-intellect has monkeyed with physics, as well as with chemistry and biology and that there are no blind forces worth speaking about in nature. The numbers one calculates from the facts seem to me so overwhelming as to put this conclusion almost beyond question.”<sup>9</sup> Paul Davies, a highly respected physicist and agnostic, who was one of Hoyle’s students, agreed, “There is for me powerful evidence that there is something going on behind it all...it seems as though somebody has fine-tuned nature’s numbers to make the universe. The impression of design is overwhelming.”<sup>1</sup>

**Q:** What do you think of those two quotes?







# 4

# STANDARDS AND MORALITY

## S – Standards and Morality Point to God

Jesus defined God as the standard of good (Mk. 10:18). Without a standard of good there would be no true way of defining right or wrong. The reality that some things are right and others are wrong is evidence for the existence of God. This has traditionally been called the moral argument for God's existence.



Before going any further, let's clear up some terms. The word "subjective" describes something that is based on a subject, like a person. For example, your ice cream preference is subjective. The word "objective" describes something that exists outside of subjects. Things that are objectively true are based in facts, not opinions. For example, math is objective.

**Q:** Based on those definitions, could you give another example of something that is subjective and something that is objective?

**The Moral Argument** (as stated by Dr. William Lane Craig<sup>1</sup>):

Premise 1: If God does not exist, objective moral values and duties do not exist.

Premise 2: Objective moral values and duties do exist.

Conclusion: Therefore, God exists.

**Q:** Does the moral argument seem convincing to you? Why or why not?

## Convinced!



Over the years, this argument has convinced many intelligent people of God's existence. These have included former atheists like C. S. Lewis (pictured here) and world renowned scientist Francis Collins (who led the human genome project and directed the National Institutes of Health). C.S. Lewis rejected atheism and went on to influence millions for Christ. His thoughtful approach to apologetics is an example for all of us today.

C. S. Lewis described his journey this way:

“My argument against God was that the universe seemed so cruel and unjust. Just how had I got this idea of just and unjust? A man does not call a line crooked unless he has some idea of a straight line. What was I comparing this universe with when I called it unjust? ... Thus in the very act of trying to prove that God did not exist—in other words, that the whole of reality was senseless - I found I was forced to assume that one part of reality—namely my idea of justice—was full of sense. Consequently atheism turns out to be too simple.”<sup>2</sup>



evolution were true (and we don't believe it is), it would only explain biological impulses, not how we ought to act.

There are other examples as well. Utilitarianism, the idea that the greatest good is what is best, fails to explain how to determine the greatest good. Rights-based concepts of morality fail to definitively explain what these rights are or where they come from. Virtue ethics is an ancient approach but it fails to define what is virtuous and why we ought to be virtuous. Ethical egoism and moral subjectivism are inherently subjective.

The one seemingly objective approach is called brute fact theory. It asserts that objective moral values and duties do exist but need no explanation, they just are. No atheist would allow that kind of argument for something like God's existence. Neither can we accept a weak argument like this for morality.

None of these theories really gets the atheist out of premise one so let's consider how they handle premise 2, "objective moral values and duties do exist."

The atheist can deny this but at a very steep cost; they have to give up all objective ethical standards. Dawkins does just that, writing, "In a universe of electrons and selfish genes, blind physical forces and genetic replication, some people are going to get hurt, other people are going to get lucky, and you won't find any rhyme or reason in it, nor any justice. The universe that we observe has precisely the properties we should expect if there is, at bottom, no design, no purpose, no evil, no good, nothing but pitiless indifference."<sup>3</sup>

**Q:** What is wrong with Dawkins' proposal and what might a world based on this philosophy look like?

Most regular people who aren't pre-committed to atheism recognize the insanity of this. Torturing babies, raping children, and mass genocide are objectively wrong. Denying that is insane. Agreeing with this conclusion leads us to the existence of God.

The argument is valid and the premises are too, unless one is willing to completely give up all morality, as Dawkins claims to do above. If anything is really right or wrong, the truth that God exists stands.

## **The Skeptic's Smokescreen**

Many atheists will respond by saying that different societies have different views of morality so we can't claim there is an objective standard. Although different societies disagree on some aspects of morality, they don't usually disagree on the fundamentals; they simply define terms differently. Everyone knows murder, rape, and theft are wrong; some just define those terms differently than others. But, just like ignorance of math is not a valid argument against math, this is no valid rebuttal of the moral law.

Christians hold to what Philosophers call divine command theory. We believe certain things are objectively right because they conform with God's standards, while others are objectively wrong because they don't. If the Bible is true, and we will soon make that case, we can trust what it says about morality.

## **Talking Points**

When using this argument, use extreme examples, and ones that are socially relevant. You might ask if the atheist believes Hitler's holocaust, racism, or gay-bashing are morally justifiable. Of course, they'd never agree to this. If they do, they're betraying their bias. Also make sure to appeal to peoples' intuition. They

know certain things are right and certain things are wrong. They know they ought not hate and ought to love. These strong convictions point to the existence of God. Help them realize that.

## The Problem of Evil

How a good and all powerful God could allow evil to exist is an age-old question.<sup>4</sup> This book has an entire appendix devoted to addressing this objection and others. When atheists use evil to try to refute the existence of God, they must assume an objective moral standard, something that requires the existence of God. Dr. Frank Turek explains how this is effectively stealing from God to make a case against God.<sup>5</sup> Appendix B is devoted to answering the problem of evil, pain, and suffering.

As Christians, we know evil exists, that it isn't created by God but it is the failure to measure up to God and His objective standard of right and wrong. We also have the hope that even though God doesn't always stop people from freely choosing evil, He promises to bring good out of it (Rom. 8:28).

**Q:** Have you had to trust God with an experience of pain or evil? How did He walk you through it?

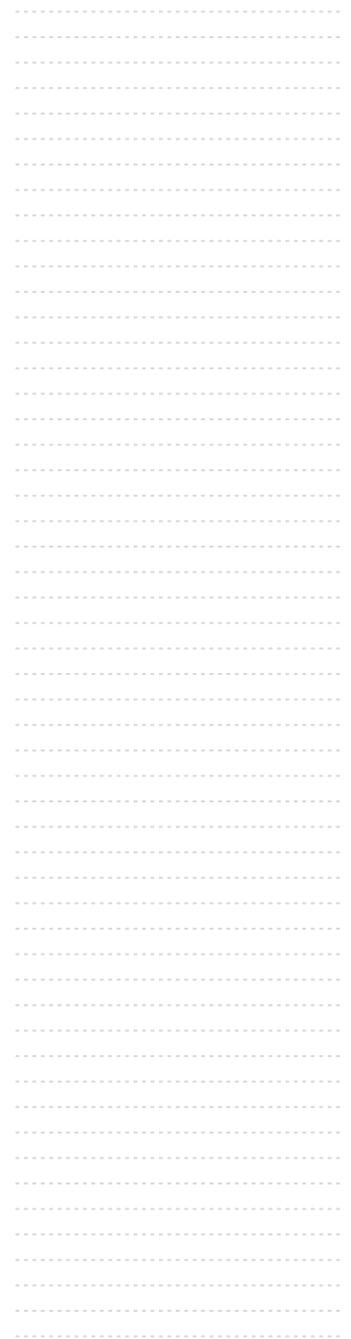
## Conclusion

People intuitively know that certain things are right and others are wrong. No one would permit you to steal their wallet if you claimed you thought it was OK. People everywhere recognize evil when they see it. The moral argument for God's existence tells us that objective morality exists and that it points us to God. When dealing with doubt, remember to remind yourself of the truth that standards and morality point to the existence of God.



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<sup>1</sup> William Lane Craig, Reasonable Faith: Christian Truth and Apologetics, p.172,  
<sup>2</sup> C.S. Lewis, Mere Christianity, pp. 45–46. <sup>3</sup> Richard Dawkins, River Out of  
Eden: A Darwinian View of Life. <sup>4</sup> Douglas Groothuis, Christian Apologetics,  
p.616, <sup>5</sup> Frank Turek, Stealing from God: Why Atheists Need God to Make Their  
Case.





## There is a Wealth of Historical Evidence for Jesus

Get ready for a surprise. The details from that last paragraph are all biblical truths but these specific statements came from ancient, non-Christian historians, who corroborated the biblical narrative. J. Warner Wallace attributes them to Phlegon (phle-gon), Thallus (thal-lus), Julius Africanus (j-oo-l-y-uh-s a-fri-kaa-nahs), Tacitus (tas-i-tuhs), Mara Bar-Serapion (mara bar ser-a-pi-on), Pliny (plin-y) the Younger, Suetonius (sue-tow-nius), Lucian (loo-shuhn) of Samosata, Celsus (sel-sus), and most famously, Josephus (joh-see-fuhs).<sup>1</sup> Shocked? Many aren't aware that ancient historians validated the Gospels.

There are almost as many ancient, non-Christian historical accounts about Jesus as there are about Tiberius Caesar, who ruled the Roman Empire at that time.<sup>2</sup> If you include Christian references, there are many more historical accounts about Jesus.<sup>3</sup> The ancient, non-Christian historians, including many who were antagonistic, end up corroborating the Gospel narrative in an astounding way.

## There is a Wealth of Historical Evidence for Jesus' Resurrection

The Gospel accounts include eyewitness testimony. John describes pericardial effusion (Jn. 19:34), a scientific and medical phenomenon the ancients didn't know about. He was an eyewitness! There are also divergent details in the Gospels that would be expected of eyewitness testimony. Divergencies, like different numbers of angels, aren't contradictory, they just highlight different details at different times and places, and are evidence of eyewitness testimony. Richard Bauckham's *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses* is a great book on this topic.

Historians generally agree embarrassing details are accurate. In that time and place, the testimony of women was not generally accepted yet the Gospel writers credit women with finding the empty tomb. They also admitted many of Jesus'

## Important Term

***Pericardial effusion:***  
This occurs when fluid builds up around the heart and would have been commonplace in crucifixion victims. John describes both water and blood flowing from Jesus'

male disciples doubted it. These embarrassing details were not made up.

The disciples adamantly claimed a bodily resurrection. This would have been easy to disprove if it hadn't happened. The critics didn't deny the empty tomb; many even admitted it. The Babylonian Talmud even claims that Jesus was raised through incantation and states, "woe to him who makes himself alive by the name of God."<sup>4</sup> Skeptics don't admit things they don't have to.

## Convinced!



Gary Habermas struggled with doubt earlier in life but the evidence for the resurrection convinced him. He is the top authority on Christ's resurrection and his twelve Minimal Facts are almost universally accepted, by both Christian and non-Christian scholars alike.<sup>5</sup> Facts 1, 4, 5, 11, and 12 are all that are needed to defend the resurrection but we have twelve!<sup>6</sup> No competing theory explains more than a few of these facts.

## Habermas' Minimal Facts

1. Jesus died by Roman crucifixion.
2. Jesus was buried in a private tomb.
3. Jesus' disciples were initially discouraged.
4. Jesus' tomb was found empty shortly after His burial.
5. The disciples and many others were convinced they saw the risen Christ.
6. Their lives were completely transformed, even to the point of being willing to be persecuted and martyred. Many people die for their beliefs; no one dies for what they know is not true.

7. The story of the resurrection took place very early, at the beginning of church history. It is not a myth that evolved.
8. The disciples proclaimed the resurrection first in Jerusalem, the place it occurred and where it could have been refuted if it was false. It wasn't!
9. The church began based on the message of the resurrection.
10. Sunday became the primary day for gathering and worshiping. It would have taken something monumental, like the resurrection, to convince Jewish believers to worship on Sunday rather than on the Sabbath.
11. The resurrection convinced James, Jesus' brother, a former skeptic.
12. It did the same for Saul, also known as Paul, a persecutor of Christians.

**Q:** What do you think of Habermas' Minimal Facts?

## Considering Alternative Theories and Hypotheses

Historians can use the following criteria when evaluating a historical theory.<sup>7</sup> A good theory should explain more of the data than the others (explanatory scope). It should best explain the data (explanatory power). It should be implied by more of the data (plausibility). A good theory can't string together unwarranted hypotheses (it must be less ad hoc). It should also be disconfirmed by fewer accepted beliefs than the others. A good theory will meet these criteria better than their alternatives. As you consider the theories below, you'll notice none of them

explains more than a few of Habermas' Minimal Facts. A serious historian would not accept these rebuttals.

There are alternative hypotheses that attempt to get around the evidence but they all fail. One wild theory is that the resurrection was just plagiarized from pagan myths. This fails to address the evidence for the resurrection. Muslims claim Judas magically died in Jesus' place. There is no evidence for this and it fails to address the evidence. Another crazy idea is that Jesus had a twin brother. Jesus' mother, brothers, and disciples wouldn't have been confused by this.

Swoon theory used to be quite popular. It claimed that Jesus didn't really die but resuscitated in the tomb. People didn't survive crucifixion but even if He had, there would have been no way that a nearly dead man could have moved the stone which sealed the tomb or overpowered a Roman guard unit.

A more common claim is that the resurrection is a myth that evolved over time. The early evidence for the resurrection dismantles that. Another accusation is that the body was moved, stolen, or never buried in the first place. If it had been moved, the authorities could have easily stopped the early Christian movement by saying so. There is no way it could have been stolen. The disciples couldn't have overpowered a Roman guard unit and surely wouldn't have gone on to face persecution and death for the lie that Jesus rose from the dead if they had made it up. The idea that Jesus was never buried is a blatant denial of the earliest historical evidence. Finally, some insist eyewitness accounts were just mass hallucinations, even though mass hallucinations have never been observed.

## **The Skeptic's Smokescreen**

The most reputable critic acknowledges these rebuttals aren't historical and recognizes they are highly unlikely. He states, "From a purely historical point of view, a highly unlikely event is far more probable than a virtually impossible

one.”<sup>8</sup> Because of his assumption that resurrections are impossible, he ignores the evidence for the resurrection. That’s called begging the question and it is a logical fallacy.

## Key Concept

The alternative theories don’t satisfy the historical criteria. Only the resurrection explains all the data; no other theory accounts for more than three or four of the Minimal Facts. The critics cannot refute it without appealing to an assumption that miracles can’t happen. Skeptics often state that supernatural claims cannot be considered but the evidence for the resurrection destroys their anti-supernatural bias (a view that is called metaphysical naturalism). Please check out Craig Keener’s book *Miracles* for more on this topic. The evidence for the miracle of the resurrection is incredibly strong.

## Talking Points

Don’t get sidetracked by minor issues! Our faith is based on the resurrection (1 Cor. 15:17). The evidence for that is solid. No other faith has a Savior that demonstrated power over death. Try to keep your apologetical conversations centered on Jesus and the resurrection. Regardless of other questions we might have, Jesus rose from the dead, so He is the only one worth following. Since He beat death, you can trust Him with any other doubts.

## Conclusion

Just like height, length, and width make up one essence, three dimensional space, God also exists as three in one, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Matt. 28:19). Jesus is God and He came to earth as God in human flesh (Matt. 1:23). The Bible tells us



## Book Suggestion

*The Case for the Resurrection of Jesus* by Gary Habermas and Mike Licona.

## Video Training

[thebestfacts.com/videos](http://thebestfacts.com/videos)

## References

<sup>1</sup> J. Warner Wallace, <http://coldcasechristianity.com/2014/is-there-any-evidence-for-jesus-outside-the-bible/>, Habermas & Licona, *The Case for the Resurrection*, p. 127–128, <sup>3</sup> Ryan Turner, <https://carm.org/jesus-exist>, <sup>4</sup> Köstenberger, Kellum, & Quarles, *The Cradle the Cross and the Crown*, Kindle, loc. 3880. , <sup>5</sup> Gary Habermas, *The Historical Jesus: Ancient Evidence for the Life of Christ*, p. 158, <sup>6</sup> Habermas & Licona, *The Case for the Resurrection of Jesus*, pp. 48–69, <sup>7</sup> Christopher Behan McCullagh, *Justifying Historical Descriptions* (Cambridge Studies in Philosophy), p. 19, <sup>8</sup> Bart Ehrman, *Jesus, Interrupted: Revealing the Hidden Contradictions in the Bible (And Why We Don't Know About Them)*, p.177.

# 6 THE BIBLE FORETELLS THE FUTURE

## F – The Bible Foretells the Future

Jesus claimed that the Bible was prophetic and explained that Old Testament prophecies about the Messiah were fulfilled in Him (Matt. 26:56). Hundreds of Biblical prophecies have been accurately fulfilled and others are coming to pass in modern times. Jesus fulfilled more than 100 prophecies. Accurate prophecies give us incredible evidence of God's fingerprints on His Word, because only an eternal and all-knowing God could foretell the future.

## Prophecy in the Bible

Time and time again, the Bible claims to be a prophetic book. Although some prophecies may be vague, many are clear and convincing. Accurate prophecies confirm the uniqueness of the Bible. No other religious text can compare.

## Convinced!



Alexander the Great was convinced of prophecy in the Bible. In the Antiquities of the Jews 11.337, Josephus wrote, “And when the Book of Daniel was showed him wherein Daniel declared that one of the Greeks should destroy the empire of the Persians, he supposed that himself was the person intended.” Some critics try to write Daniel’s prophecy off as a later fabrication, but Josephus’ claim prevents that. The Samaritans were allowed to keep their

temple, Alexander didn't give the Jews any new privileges, and Alexander's vision of the God of the Jews are all features that a fabrication would have avoided.<sup>1</sup> We'll look at Daniel's prophecy of Alexander in a moment.

Critics usually reject biblical prophecies because of their bias of naturalism. Remember, metaphysical naturalism is the philosophical belief that there is nothing outside of the natural universe. This belief is not based in logic and can't be tested by science. It is not justified. Critics typically reject prophecies solely because of their commitment to naturalism. Because of their bias, they will often assert, in spite of any actual evidence, that prophetic passages were written after the events they describe and then inserted back into earlier texts. They shouldn't do this. Josephus' account about Alexander the Great confirms Daniel's prophecy came before Alexander.

## **Handling Disagreements**

When skeptics try to ignore prophecies because of a belief in naturalism, we should remind them that there is great evidence for the supernatural. The beginning of the universe is one example. There is no natural explanation for that. The resurrection is another. Both of these events are naturalistically inexplicable facts. Keep the beginning of the universe and the resurrection of Christ in focus in your apologetical conversations.

## **A Few Examples of Biblical Prophecies**

Alexander the Great was prophesied in Daniel 8. Daniel predicted that the first king of Greece would conquer the dual kingdom of the Medo-Persians. Alexander's Father was the first king of Macedon but Alexander was the first king to rule the global Greek empire Daniel foretold. Daniel prophesied that Alexander would die at a young age, not due to a human cause, and that his kingdom would be split into

weaker kingdoms, that would then give rise to one that would persecute God's people. This happened as foretold. The critic's response doesn't work.<sup>2</sup>

Six centuries of global empires are foretold in Daniel 2:37-42. The first is Nebuchadnezzar's Babylonian empire (v. 37-38). In verse 39, Daniel explained how Babylon would be followed by two more kingdoms; these are the Medo-Persian kingdom, described in Daniel 5:28, and the Greek kingdom that dominated the globe, described in Daniel 8. Verses 40-43 describe the fourth kingdom, which was the Roman Empire, also described in Daniel 11. Daniel 2:37-42 predicted the kingdoms of Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome.<sup>3</sup> This passage also includes a prophecy about Jesus, describing the Kingdom of God that would come after the fourth kingdom (v. 44-45).

Cyrus the Great (Cyrus II of Persia) is foretold in Isaiah 44:28-45:7. This prophecy mentioned Cyrus by name about 150 years before he was even born. It also predicted many details of his life (like the fact that he would subdue nations and mandate that Jerusalem be rebuilt).<sup>4</sup> As with Daniel, critics have tried to argue that this was all written after the fact but evidence confirms that is not the case.<sup>3</sup>

Israel's rebirth as a nation was foretold in many places. Amos 9:14-15 is one. Isaiah 66:8 prophesied Israel's rebirth in a day, which happened on May 14, 1948. Hosea 11:11 prophesied that God's people would return to Israel on the air (something that seems prophetic of modern transportation). Jeremiah 31:23 and Zephaniah 3:9 prophesied the rebirth of the Hebrew language.

Ezekiel 4 seems to imply the year of Israel's restoration.<sup>5</sup> Ezekiel prophesies 430 years of exile. The first 70 of those were the Babylonian exile prophesied in Jeremiah 25. Chuck Missler notes that Israel did not repent so their remaining punishment was multiplied by 7 (Lev. 26:18), resulting in 2,520 Hebrew years or 2,483 solar years, the exact time between the end of the exile and 1948.<sup>5</sup>

**Q:** What do you think of these prophecies so far?

## The Skeptic's Smokescreen

Many skeptics make the claim that prophetic passages were written after the events they describe and then inserted back into earlier texts. They do this because of their bias of naturalism, not because of actual evidence. Isaiah is a classic example of how skeptics will try to chop up a book into different sections. Their attacks are unfounded.<sup>3, 4</sup> Skeptics can't do this with Messianic prophecies, because many of these manuscripts predate Christ. The critic cannot claim that these were written after the fact.

## 8 Messianic Prophecies that Jesus Fulfilled

Jesus fulfilled more than 100 prophecies. The chance of 1 person fulfilling just 8 of these has been calculated at 1 in  $10^{17}$ .<sup>6</sup> Jesus couldn't have just fulfilled these by accident. Neither could He have fabricated any of the 8 examples we'll consider. These prophecies prove the Bible is prophetic and Jesus is unique.

- 1) Prophecy foretold that Jesus would be a descendant of David (2 Sam. 7:12-16, Jer. 23:5, Ps. 89:3-4). He was (Matt. 1:1, 6 and Lk. 3:31).
- 2) Prophecy foretold that Jesus would die for our sins in 33 AD (Dan. 9:24-27). Josh McDowell explains this one.<sup>7</sup> The seventy sevens of Daniel's prophecy begin with Artaxerxes decree to rebuild Jerusalem in 444 BC (Neh. 2:1-8). The first sixty-nine sevens, the time from the decree till the crucifixion totaled 483 Hebrew calendar years, which are equivalent to 476 solar years, resulting in a date of 33 AD for the Messiah's entry into Jerusalem to die for our sins. This was all fulfilled (Mt. 21:1-11, John 12:12-16).
- 3) Prophecy foretold Jesus' virgin Birth (Is. 7:14). Where he can be tested, Luke, the author of both Luke and Acts, proves to be an accurate historian.<sup>8</sup> He explains the fulfillment of this prophecy (Lk. 1:26-38).

## Important term

**Messianic:** Having to do with the Messiah, the anointed one. The New Testament word for Messiah is "Christ." Old Testament prophecies about the coming Messiah were fulfilled in Jesus Christ, the Messiah.

4) Prophecy foretold that Jesus would be born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:1-2). He was (Matt. 2, Lk. 2, and Jn. 7:42).

5) Prophecy foretold that Jesus would be preceded by John the Baptist (Is. 40:3 and Mal. 3:1). He was (Matt. 3, 11, Mk. 1, Luke 7, and John 1 and 3).

6) Prophecy foretold that Jesus would do miracles (Is. 35:5-6). The Gospels record numerous miracles that Jesus performed. Ancient non-Christian sources, like those mentioned in chapter five, corroborate this. Again, the critic's typical rebuttal is to appeal to a presupposition of metaphysical naturalism.

7) Prophecy foretold that Jesus would be crucified (Ps. 22:16, Is. 53, and Zech. 12:10). Jesus' crucifixion is recorded in the Gospels. It is also a fact of history.<sup>8,9</sup> Crucifixion began being practiced in the 6th century BC.<sup>10</sup> David wrote Psalm 22 in the eleventh century BC.<sup>11</sup> Isaiah was written in the 8th century BC.<sup>3</sup> Zechariah was written in the sixth century BC.<sup>3</sup> These passages spoke prophetically of Jesus' crucifixion centuries before crucifixion began being used.

8) Prophecy foretold that Jesus would rise from the dead (Ps. 16:10, Is. 53:10-11, and Jn. 2:18-22). Jesus even prophesied his own resurrection as well (John 2:18-22). Jesus' resurrection is a fact of history that believers can be confident in<sup>8,9</sup> (remember what we learned in chapter five).

**Q:** What do these prophecies tell you? How do these Messianic prophecies encourage you in your faith?

These were just 8 Messianic prophecies. There are more than a hundred. Not only is the Bible prophetically accurate, it prophetically points to Jesus, the cornerstone of the Christian faith. These Messianic prophecies highlight the trustworthiness of Scripture and the person and ministry of Jesus, our Savior.

## Talking Points

Always keep apologetics focused on Jesus. You can do that by highlighting the Messianic prophecies about Him. Messianic prophecies are also the hardest ones for skeptics to refute. Isaiah 52:13-53:12 is a great passage to share with people. Very few people will fail to recognize that it describes Jesus.

## Key Concept

The prophetic nature of Scripture demonstrates God's fingerprints on His word. There is no other religious text that comes anywhere near the prophetic reliability of the Bible. Hundreds of biblical prophecies have already been fulfilled and more are in our time as well. The Bible is trustworthy.

## Conclusion

This is not the only argument for our faith but it is one more piece in the comprehensive case for it. It is also one that can be helpful in apologetical conversations. Remember to remind yourself of these truths when you find yourself doubting God's Word.

**Q:** Review the BEST FACTS and TALL TALES acronyms. Write them out in the margins and practice memorizing them.

**Q:** What are your top takeaways from this chapter?

Q: How did this chapter encourage you in your walk with God?

Q: How has this information emboldened you to share your faith?

## Book Suggestion

*Evidence That Demands a Verdict: Life-Changing Truth for a Skeptical World* by Josh McDowell and Sean McDowell.

## Video Training

[thebestfacts.com/videos](http://thebestfacts.com/videos)

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## The Bible accurately describes People, Places, Things, and Events

There is a wealth of evidence for many of the Bible's people. Lawrence Mykytiuk, of Purdue, highlights the following examples of Old Testament people confirmed by archaeology.<sup>2</sup> These include Shishak, So, Tirhakah, Necho II, Hophra, Meshah, Hadadezer, Ben-hadad, son of Hadadezer, Hazael, Ben-hadad, son of Hazael, Rezin, Omri, Ahab, Jehu, Joash, Jeroboam II, Menahem, Pekah, Hoshea, Sanballat "I," King David, Uzziah (Azariah), Ahaz, Hezekiah, Manasseh, Hilkiyah, Shaphan, Azariah, Gemariah, Jehoiachin, Shelemiah, Jehucal, Pashhur, Gedaliah, Tiglath-pileser III, Shalmaneser V, Sargon II, Sennacherib, Adrammelech, Esarhaddon, Merodach-baladan II, Nebuchadnezzar II, Nebo-sarsekim, Evil-merodach, Belshazzar, son and co-regent of Nabonidus, Cyrus the Great, Darius the Great, Xerxes I, Artaxerxes I, and Darius II. These are just a few and there are others.

Many biblical places are being confirmed by archaeology as well. For example, the Temple Mount Sifting Project has found bullae mentioning many biblical cities. These include Eltolad, Lachish, Nezib, Arab, Keilah, Gebim, Maon, Jagur, Gath, Bethul, Aphekah, Gibeah, Adullam, Zaanannaim, Socoh, Gibeon, Zarah, Adoraim, and Ziph. These are just a few cities confirmed by archaeology. There are many more, including countless biblical places you can still visit today.<sup>3</sup>

Archaeological finds continue confirming many of the different things that are described in Scripture. The historical reliability of Acts is a famous example. Dr. Craig Keener has published a thorough commentary on the book of Acts (it is the longest commentary on any biblical book ever written). He has demonstrated numerous historical parallels between Acts and first century evidence from the area.<sup>4</sup> There is evidence for many of the things described in Acts. Another scholar, Dr. Richard Bauckham, has demonstrated many eyewitness features in the Gospels.<sup>5</sup> The Gospels describe things only eyewitnesses could have known.

**Q:** How does eyewitness evidence support the Bible's case?

## Important term.

**Bulla:** (bu-luh), singular and bullae (bu-lee), plural: A bulla was an official imprint that was used to seal royal documents and artifacts. Many bullae are being found that corroborate biblical

## Convinced!



J. Warner Wallace was a cold case homicide detective that used to be an atheist. He applied the same techniques he had used as a detective to the evidence concerning the historical reliability of the Gospel accounts. He determined the Gospels were historically accurate and is now a world-renowned Christian apologist. Find out more about him at [coldcasechristianity.com](http://coldcasechristianity.com).

Many biblical events have also been verified by archaeology. As described in chapter five, the evidence for the resurrection is irrefutable. Another exciting example is the Tall el-Hammam Excavation Project, which Dr. Steven Collins has recently associated with the biblical city of Sodom.<sup>6</sup> It was incinerated by a meteorite blast; many of the discoveries at that location are in line with the biblical description of the destruction that occurred there (Gen. 19).

**Q:** So far, what has been most surprising to you and why?

## Talking Points

There are some wild claims that you should be careful not to gullibly repeat. You may have seen pictures or heard stories of Egyptian chariot wheels in the Red Sea, giant skeletons, or other fantastical finds; these are hoaxes. Be careful to do a little research before repeating things that might sound too good to be true. Stick with the abundance of good archaeological evidence; don't blow your credibility by spreading false evidence!

## Ten Specific Examples of Archaeological Finds



1) The Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered in the Qumran caves near the Dead Sea in the 1940's and are one of the greatest archaeological finds of all time. They have confirmed the textual integrity of the Old Testament.

Photo Credit: 129284202 © Vadim Lerner | dreamstime.com



2) The Tel Dan inscription was the first archaeological evidence for King David. There is other evidence for him and even some, like the Hacksilber Silver Hoards, that corroborate biblical accounts of his son Solomon.

Photo Credit: The Israel Museum, Jerusalem/Israel Antiquities Authority (Meidad Suchowolski)



3) The Merneptah Stele (steely) is the earliest reference to Israel. It confirms Israel's presence and time-frame in Canaan, from an Egyptian perspective. The Moabite stone is a similar artifact from a Moabite perspective.

Photo Credit: Webscribe, commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Merneptah\_Israel\_Stele\_Cairo.jpg



4) The Ketef Hinnom Amulet Scrolls. These small silver scrolls include Old Testament phrases, like the blessing in Numbers 6:24-26, and God's name, YHWH. They also show the reliability of the Old Testament.

Photo Credit: Public Domain



5) Many Bullae and seals. Archaeologists have discovered Bullae and seals belonging to many prominent biblical people, like Hezekiah, shown here, Jeroboam, Isaiah, and Jezebel, but also for more obscure people, like Ahimaaz.

Photo Credit: Courtesy of Dr. Eilat Mazar; Photo by Ouria Tadmor



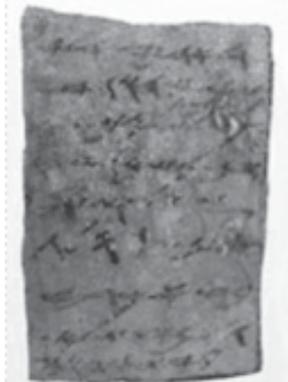
6) Hezekiah's tunnel. 2 Kings 20:20 describes the building of Hezekiah's tunnel. You can still visit this 3,000 year old archaeological masterpiece, along with the original builders' inscription.

Photo Credit: 118851484 @ Mikhail Semenov | dreamstime.com



7) King Uzziah's burial plate. This indicates King Uzziah's possible burial place. Read Isaiah 6:1 for a little context on this artifact.

Photo Credit: Samuel and Saidye Bronfman Archaeology Wing in the Israel Museum in Jerusalem, Yoav Dothan



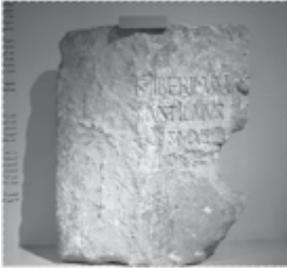
8) The House of Yaweh Ostracon. This describes the Jerusalem temple and God's name, YHWH. This, along with the Ketef Hinnom Scrolls, disprove the criticism that YHWH was added into the Old Testament after the exile.

Photo Credit: [allaboutarchaeology.org/house-of-yahweh-ostacon-faq.htm](http://allaboutarchaeology.org/house-of-yahweh-ostacon-faq.htm)



9) The Caiaphas Ossuary. This is the bone box that the high priest who judged Jesus was buried in. There is another similar bone box for Jesus' brother James but the authenticity of that one has been debated.<sup>7</sup>

Photo Credit: Deror Avi, commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ossuary\_of\_the\_high\_priest\_Joseph\_Caiaphas\_P1180839.JPG



10) The Pilate inscription. This was the first archaeological reference to Pilate, who condemned Jesus to death. Now there are others also.

Photo Credit: Public Domain

**Q:** Which of these ten specific examples were most surprising to you and why?

These are just a few exciting examples of the historical reliability of the Bible. There are many more and new ones are being found all the time.

## Key Concept.

Although some finds have caused some confusion, archaeology has corroborated the Bible in many ways. Dr. Norm Geisler explains, "While thousands of finds from the ancient world support in broad outline and often in detail the biblical picture, not one incontrovertible find has ever contradicted the Bible."<sup>8</sup>

**Q:** What do you think of Dr. Geisler's quote above?

## The Skeptic's Smokescreen

Skeptics occasionally try to use minor, random findings to invalidate the bible even though there are hundreds of finds that corroborate it. These criticisms are always refuted in due time. For example, news sources around the globe, and even a world renowned scientific journal, recently reported that a modern genetic analysis disproved the biblical claim that Israel had destroyed the Canaanites, because the descendants of the Canaanites are still living in Lebanon.<sup>9</sup> These sources failed to admit that the Bible never said the Canaanites were destroyed. Jesus even ministered to a Canaanite woman in Matthew 15. The comprehensive case is strong and attacks like these always end up falling apart.

## Conclusion

The Bible claims to be historical and Jesus claimed that people, places, things, and events in the Bible were historically accurate. Archaeology continues to demonstrate the historical reliability of the Bible. In spite of skeptical attacks, the Bible has stood the test of time and proved true again and again. We hope you'll memorize some of the archaeological evidence and be ready to share it when you encounter questions about the Bible's reliability in evangelistic conversations. Also remember to remind yourself of these truths when you face doubt.

**Q:** Review the BEST FACTS and TALL TALES acronyms. Write them out in the margins and practice memorizing them.

**Q:** What are your top takeaways from this chapter?

**Q:** How did this chapter encourage you in your walk with God?

**Q:** How has this information emboldened you to share your faith?

## Book Suggestions

1) *The Popular Handbook of Archaeology and the Bible* by Holden and Geisler and 2) *Jesus and His World: The Archaeological Evidence* by Craig Evans.

## Video Training

[thebestfacts.com/videos](http://thebestfacts.com/videos)

## References

<sup>1</sup> Merrill, Rooker, and Grisanti, *The World and the Word: An Introduction to the Old Testament*, <sup>2</sup> <http://www.biblicalarchaeology.org/daily/people-cultures-in-the-bible/people-in-the-bible/50-people-in-the-bible-confirmed-archeologically/>, <sup>3</sup> <http://www.ritmeyer.com/2012/01/03/fiscal-bulla-found-in-jerusalem/>, <sup>4</sup> Craig Keener, *Acts: An Exegetical Commentary: Introduction and 1:1-2:47*, p. 220, <sup>5</sup> Richard Bauckham, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses: The Gospels as Eyewitness Testimony* 2nd Edition. <sup>6</sup> Collins and Scott, *Discovering the City of Sodom: The Fascinating, True Account of the Discovery of the Old Testament's Most Infamous City*. <sup>7</sup> <http://popular-archaeology.com/issue/summer-2016/article/ancient-james-ossuary-and-jehoash-tablet-inscriptions-may-be-authentic-say-experts>, <sup>8</sup> Norm Geisler, *The Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics*, p. 52, <sup>9</sup> <https://evolutionnews.org/2017/07/for-culturally-illiterate-science-reporters-ancient-canaanite-dna-yields-occasion-to-slap-the-bible-around/>

# 8

# THE BIBLE IS COHERENT

## C – The Bible is Coherent

Jesus claimed to be the truth and insisted that everyone on the side of truth would listen to Him (Jn. 14:6, 18:37). The Bible is coherent, meaning it agrees with reality. The coherence of Scripture gives us great reason to trust Jesus and His claims. You can trust the Bible!

It is internally coherent; it teaches us on countless subjects without contradiction or error. It is externally coherent; it accurately reflects the reality of the universe around us and the history that brought us to this point. Finally, it is personally coherent. Only the Bible correctly describes the human condition and a relevant solution. The Bible is coherent.

## Convinced!



G. K. Chesterton is one notable example of someone who attributed his faith to the coherence of Scripture. Chesterton was a British author whose works were instrumental in C. S. Lewis' conversion. His famous book *Orthodoxy* is an absolute masterpiece. Throughout his writing, he convincingly describes the coherence of Scripture and Christianity and how that confirms our faith. We encourage you to read his masterpiece *Orthodoxy*.



One example of this is Jesus' statement that "as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth" (Matt. 12:40). Many critics have pointed out that Jesus died on a Thursday and rose on a Sunday morning; in other words, He was not in the grave three days and three nights. This accusation misunderstands how the people of that time spoke about time and the cultural expression we see repeated in Esther 4:16-5:1.<sup>3</sup> Things like this that can often be lost in translation.

Divergent accounts in the Gospels have confused others. For example, Matthew said one angel rolled the stone away from the tomb, Mark said that one angel spoke to the women inside the tomb, Luke said that two angels appeared to the women outside of the tomb, and John claimed two angels appeared to Mary inside of the tomb. These are not contradictory details. They reflect different facts at different times. Just like there might be different numbers of people at a coffee shop at different times of the day, there were different numbers of angels in and around Jesus' tomb at different times on that first Easter Sunday. Divergent accounts like these are evidence of eyewitness testimony.

Plain ignorance explains some other supposed errors. For example, some critics incorrectly claim that the Bible says Pi equals 3.0. 1 Kings 7:23 and 2 Chronicles 4:2 describe a metal basin in Solomon's palace, not the formula for a perfect circle. The dimensions of this ornamental basin are nearly perfectly circular but this passage makes no claim whatsoever about Pi equaling 3.0.

**Q:** What themes do you see in the skeptical attacks?

## The Skeptic's Smokescreen

Many supposed errors are minor and mostly insignificant. Criticisms like, "Pi equals 3.0," are really just grasping at straws. There are good answers for these arguments but most skeptics don't want to hear them. They usually just toss out one after another faster than you can respond, as a smokescreen.

## Talking Points

When people bring up random supposed problems in Scripture, try to bring the conversation back to the foundation of our faith, Jesus' resurrection. You could argue forever about hypothetical contradictions. Even if there was a contradiction somewhere, you could still confidently trust your eternity to the only One who has power over death. That being said, there aren't contradictions. There are good answers for the supposed contradictions. Regardless, keep the resurrection, the fact that our faith is based on, your focus!

**Q:** Before going any further, what is your current understanding of biblical inerrancy (the doctrine that the Bible was written without error)?

It is important to understand what the doctrine of inerrancy really means. First of all, the doctrine of inerrancy claims that the Bible was inerrantly inspired and given by God in its original autographs (the word autographs refers to the original manuscripts that were penned by the authors). We believe the original biblical manuscripts were given to us by God without error.

That does not mean that every biblical copy, fragment, manuscript, or translation in existence is flawless. Of course, some people in the past have at times made copying mistakes. Amazingly, there isn't a single variant that affects Christian doctrine.<sup>4</sup> Thankfully, scholars can comb through thousands of manuscripts to reconstitute the Bible as God delivered it.

It is also important to remember that the Bible wasn't written by twenty-first century Americans. We must read the Bible as it was intended to be read, not through the lens of our current cultural biases. Learning what the biblical authors intended with what they wrote clears up many supposed errors.

## Key Concept

Dr. Craig Blomberg clarifies something very important: we are not Christians because of inherency, we believe inerrancy because we are Christians.<sup>5</sup> Our faith rests on what Jesus did for us at the Cross. That being said, the doctrine of inerrancy is a defensible tenet of our faith.

## The Bible is Externally Coherent

The Bible accurately reflects the reality of the universe around us. The Bible is historically accurate and correctly describes our history. You can read more about this in chapter 7. The Bible is also coherent with the reality of the material universe around us. Scientific statements in the Bible reveal God's fingerprints on His word. You'll learn more about this in chapter 10.

**Q:** Remembering what you learned in chapter 7, why do you think it is important that the Bible agrees with the historical evidence?

A great argument for the coherence of Scripture is the presence of undesigned coincidences. These are unrelated passages in different biblical books that unintentionally corroborate each other. For example, although all the Gospels record the feeding of the five thousand, only John mentions that Jesus asked Philip where enough food could be bought to feed the group (John 6:1-5). Although John doesn't mention the location, Luke tells us this happened in Bethsaida (Luke 9:10). In an unrelated passage, John tells us Philip was from Bethsaida (John 1:43-44). Although unrelated, these passages corroborate each other.<sup>5</sup> There are many similar examples in Lydia McGrew's book *Hidden In Plain View: Undesigned Coincidences in the Gospels and Acts*.<sup>5</sup>

**Q:** There are many examples of unrelated passages that corroborate each other. How does that build a case for the coherence of Scripture?

## The Bible is Personally Coherent

It has been said that there are only two religions; the one that says you can get to God on your own by trying harder to do good and the one that says you can't get to God on your own and you need a Savior. That second one, the biblical view, is correct. The Bible accurately diagnoses our sinful condition. It correctly defines our inability to solve our own predicament. It describes a legitimate and historically accurate answer for our problem, Christ's death and resurrection. Finally the Bible alone provides us with a relevant solution, the free gift of salvation by grace through faith (Eph. 2:8-9). The story of what God has done in your life and in the lives of countless other believers is an example of this!

In our day and age, you will encounter a common objection to this point. In fact, this is one of the most common questions you'll hear in many apologetical conversations. That is the, "what about the LGBTQ+ community?" Please see appendix E for more on that. God loves people in the LGBTQ+ community and the gospel is relevant for them too!

The Bible is coherent when it comes to its relationship to human beings. No other book accurately describes our condition or a relevant solution. The Bible is personally coherent.

**Q:** Why is the Bible's description of our situation and Jesus' offer of salvation so unique and so important?

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## Conclusion

The coherence of Scripture is unfathomable. There is no significant question it doesn't provide answers for. There is no point in its theology or doctrine where it is contradictory. It correctly defines reality, the human condition, and the only relevant solution. These are important points to share with skeptical friends and important things to remember when you deal with doubt.

**Q:** Review the BEST FACTS and TALL TALES acronyms. Write them out in the margins and practice memorizing them.

**Q:** What are your top takeaways from this chapter?

**Q:** How did this chapter encourage you in your walk with God?

**Q:** How has this information emboldened you to share your faith?

## Book Suggestion

*Hidden In Plain View: Undesigned Coincidences in the Gospels and Acts* by Lydia McGrew.

## Video Training

[thebestfacts.com/videos](http://thebestfacts.com/videos)

## References

<sup>1</sup> <https://carm.org/introduction-bible-difficulties-and-bible-contradictions>,

<sup>2</sup> <http://eternityimpact.sermon.net/main/main/20817183> and <http://eternityimpact.sermon.net/main/main/20817184>,

<sup>3</sup> <https://carm.org/how-long-was-jesus-dead-tomb>, <sup>4</sup> Ehrman, *Misquoting Jesus*, 2005, p. 252,

<sup>5</sup> Craig Blomberg, *Can We Still Believe the Bible?: An Evangelical Engagement with Contemporary Questions*, <sup>6</sup> Lydia McGrew, *Hidden In Plain View: Undesigned Coincidences in the Gospels and Acts*.

# 9

# THE BIBLE HAS BEEN TRANSMITTED CORRECTLY

## T - The Bible has been Transmitted Correctly

Jesus promised that God's Word would be safeguarded until the end of time (Matt. 5:18). This has proven to be the case. The accurate preservation of the Bible's original text is unparalleled among ancient works. We can trust it!

We've all heard the statement that you can't trust the Bible because it has been translated too many times. That's wrong. Most people don't realize how reliable the Bible is. There are thousands of early manuscripts and they allow us to know for certain what was written. The New Testament is by far the most reliable ancient text. Nothing else compares. The term transmission describes how the Bible has been transmitted to us from the time it was written. The Bible has been transmitted more reliably than any ancient text.

And, concerning the accusation about translation, most modern translations are based on a treasure trove of ancient manuscripts and correctly communicate the message that was originally written in the Bible. You can trust the Bible!

**Q:** What are some common doubts people have about the Bible?

## How the Bible was Written

The Bible's sixty-six books were written over a couple of millennia by more than forty authors. 2 Timothy 3:16 tells us that "All Scripture is God-breathed" and 2 Peter 1:21 tells us that the Holy Spirit inspired God's prophets with His words. Although written by people, the Bible was authored by God.

## How the Books of the Bible were Affirmed

Early on, believers began formally recognizing the books that had been widely recognized as inspired from the beginning. The criteria they used included apostolicity (direct or indirect association with an apostle or prophet), orthodoxy (agreement with what the church knew to be true), antiquity (association with the early church; later fabrications, like the gnostic gospels, were rejected), and ecclesiastical usage (acceptance by a large portion of the Body of Christ since early times).<sup>1</sup>

In the fourth century, various councils of church leaders met to formally confirm which books met these criteria. These included the Council of Laodicea (in 363 AD), the Council of Hippo Regius (in 393 AD), and the Council of Carthage (in 397 AD).<sup>1</sup> A canon, or standard, of biblical books that met these criteria was affirmed and passed down to us today.

## Talking Points

When you talk about how the biblical canon was developed, make sure to stress that the books that were included were the ones that had been recognized as inspired from the beginning. The councils affirmed what had been broadly accepted from the start so that there would never be a question. They didn't just pick and choose what to accept and what to reject.

## Important Term

**Canon:** The word canon comes from the word, "rule," and refers to a standard. The biblical Canon includes the 39 books of the Old Testament and the 27 books of the New Testament.

## Important Term

**Variant:** A variant is an ancient manuscript that is different in some way from other copies. The vast majority of biblical variants are minor, involve things like spelling differences, and rarely include more than a couple of words. No Biblical variants affect Christian doctrines.<sup>2</sup>

## How the Bible was Preserved

In spite of efforts by many throughout the ages (like Diocletian's order, in 303 AD, to burn all the scriptures in the Roman empire<sup>1</sup>), the Bible has been maintained remarkably for us today. It has been preserved with a "power in numbers" approach. There are thousands of New Testament manuscripts. By comparing them, scholars can easily find any variants.

## The Manuscript Evidence for the Bible

The reliability of the Old Testament was famously demonstrated by the Dead Sea scroll finds in the 1940s. There are other arguments for the reliability of the Old Testament as well. One of those is the fact that both Jesus and the New Testament writers quoted it.

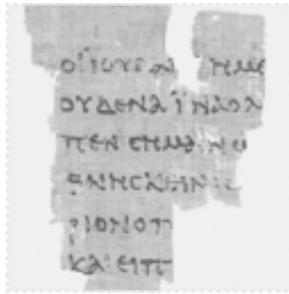


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@Rylandsimaging

The manuscript evidence for the New Testament is unparalleled in the ancient world.<sup>2</sup> Every New Testament book was written in the first century. There are nearly six thousand Greek New Testament manuscripts.<sup>1</sup> Early manuscripts are still being found. The earliest, the Rylands P52 fragment, pictured here, dates to a few decades from the original. John's original Gospel and some of his contemporaries were still around at this time making changes impossible. After the New Testament, the next most reliable ancient manuscript is Homer's Iliad; it has 643 ancient copies.<sup>1</sup> The earliest is from 500 years after the original. Compared to that, the New Testament has more than ten times as many manuscripts and they're up to ten times earlier. These manuscripts are an unbeatable 99.5% accurate.<sup>3</sup> Please see Fragments of Truth, a great documentary by Dr. Craig Evans, for more on this.

There are also nearly 20,000 manuscripts of different early translations of these documents that further corroborate what was written.<sup>1</sup> Additionally, early church leaders quoted both the Old and New Testaments and tens of thousands of their quotes corroborate much of the New Testament.

**Q:** Why do you think thousands of copies and tens of thousands of quotes help ensure the preservation of the text?

## The Skeptic's Smokescreen

There are variants in some of the ancient manuscript copies. Most of these are just words that are spelled differently and similar copying mistakes. One of the most formidable critics of the New Testament claims there are as many as 400,000 variants across tens of thousands of New Testament manuscripts and translations. Although this number is likely right, it does not affect the credibility of Scripture. That number really boils down to something like a spelling difference once in every 10 to 20 pages of text. The vast number of manuscripts allows variants to be found. Most variants are insignificant and none affect Christian doctrine. Even this skeptic admits this.<sup>4</sup>

## Key Concept

Variants don't detract from the doctrine of inerrancy, which states that God gave us His Word in an inerrant way, not that no error has ever been made in any translation or copy of the Bible. Biblical scholars are committed to sifting through thousands of manuscripts to find any copying errors that have been made so that we can reconstruct the original text as it was delivered to us by God. Variants don't prevent us from knowing the original meaning of the text. Remember, the New Testament accuracy stands at 99.5%<sup>3</sup> and no variant affects Christian doctrine.<sup>5</sup>

We can be confident of the original message of Scripture. It is probably a good thing that we don't have the original manuscripts. Making changes in these would be easier than changing thousands of manuscripts. Similarly, there would be a tendency to idolize the autographs (the original manuscripts). God has sovereignly preserved His word through a vast number of copies!

## Convinced!



Josh McDowell, a global defender of our faith, was an agnostic who opposed Christianity. He came to faith in Christ because he “had to admit that the Old and New Testament documents were some of the most reliable writings in all of antiquity.”<sup>6</sup> He added, “And if they were reliable, what about this man Jesus, whom I had dismissed as a mere carpenter? I had to admit that Jesus Christ was more than a carpenter. He was all He claimed to be.”<sup>6</sup>

## The ‘Telephone Game’ Accusation Won’t Work



When kids play the telephone game, one person will whisper a phrase to another that then evolves as it is whispered from person to person. Without a record of what was originally spoken, the original meaning can be lost. However, if the original statement is written and preserved the meaning will not be lost regardless of any future misstatements. Thousands of ancient biblical manuscripts ensure we will never lose what was originally written.

**Q:** Why don't you think the telephone game accusation is a valid critique of the Bible's authenticity?

The telephone game accusation doesn't work because anyone can look at the Hebrew text of the Old Testament and the Greek text of the New Testament to see what was originally written. There are numerous resources that make it easy for anyone to do this. A great one is [blueletterbible.org](http://blueletterbible.org).

## The Validity of Most Modern Translations

There are a few bad translations, like the Jehovah's Witnesses' New World Translation, which has changed hundreds of verses to support their cult's views. Bad translations aren't very common. Although popular, paraphrases like the Message are not true translations. Most modern translations accurately translate the text of the Bible. Word-for-word translations, like the New American Standard, thought-for-thought translations, like the Living Bible, and translations that balance the two, like the New International Version, are all pretty good. You'll often hear people saying you can't trust this one or that one (typically the NIV). These accusations are usually baseless comparisons to older translations, like the KJV, that had a Catholic bias and were translated from far fewer manuscripts. The KJV isn't bad, it's just not the best. If you stick with mainstream Christian translations, like those listed above, you'll be fine.

**Q:** What is your favorite translation and why?

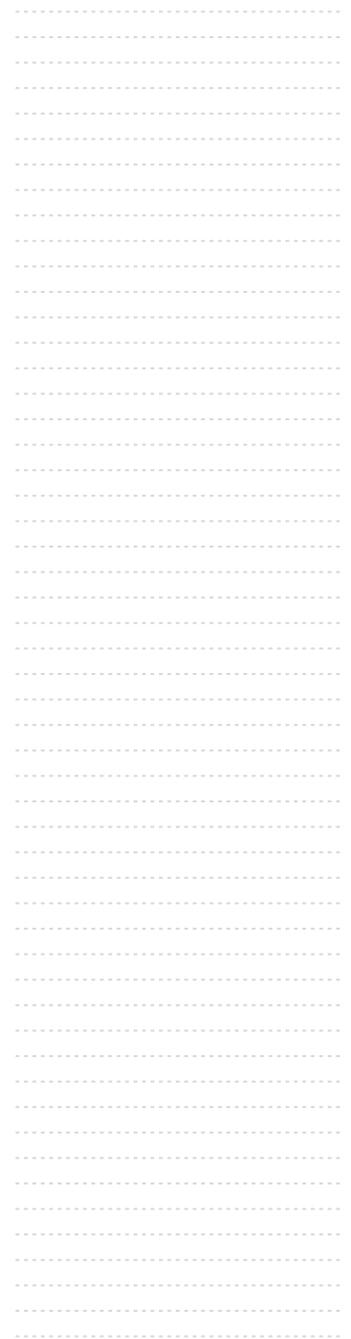
## Conclusion

The Bible has been inspired by God and the text of the Bible has been preserved in a way that no other ancient text has. You can be confident that what you read in Scripture is what God inspired to be written. Share the evidence for the reliability of the Bible with people that question it and remember to remind yourself of this when you face doubt. You can base your life on the Bible!



# References

<sup>1</sup> The Cradle the Cross and the Crown, <sup>2</sup> Josh McDowell, Evidence that Demands a Verdict, <sup>3</sup> Daniel Wallace, The Majority Text and the Original Text: Are they Identical, p. 157–158, <sup>4</sup> Ehrman, Misquoting Jesus, 2005, p. 252, <sup>5</sup> Craig Blomberg, Can We Still Believe the Bible?: An Evangelical Engagement with Contemporary Questions, p. 27. <sup>6</sup> Josh McDowell, <https://www.cru.org/how-to-know-god/my-story-a-life-changed/my-story-josh-mcdowell.html>.





**Q:** What are some of the criticisms you've heard about science and the Bible?

## The Skeptic's Smokescreen

Many skeptics claim that science and the Bible are not compatible. This is not true. It has been a common misconception since the conflict between Galileo and the Catholic Church. Many scientists from the past, like Isaac Newton, one of the greatest scientists in history, and others in our day and age, like Francis Collins, who led the human genome project, have been committed Christians. Science and the Bible are not incompatible. Misunderstanding science or the Bible can lead to the appearance of a conflict but a correct understanding of both always clears things up. Although the common narrative says there is a conflict between science and Scripture, reality tells us that there is amazing agreement between the two.

## General Revelation and Divine Revelation

There are two important terms we must understand. General revelation is what can be known about God from creation alone. Much can be known about God simply by observing the universe He has created (Rom. 1:20). For example, the beginning of the universe points us to a Creator. However, there is a lot about God that can only be revealed specifically by Him. This is what is called Divine revelation, and it is what we have in the Bible. The Trinity is an example of something we find in the Bible but couldn't learn just from nature. General revelation and Divine revelation will never contradict each other. If a supposed conflict exists, it is always due to a misunderstanding of one or the other.

Here is an example of an apparent conflict. Revelation 7:1 and 20:8 talk about the four corners of the earth. Although that seems to indicate the earth is a square, it

does not. We actually still use this phrase today and people today aren't referring to a square earth. Neither is the Bible. The same phrase describes the entirety of Israel in Ezekiel 7:2 and the nations of the earth in Isaiah 11:12. Isaiah 40:22 also tells us the earth is not square. Revelation is simply referring to the cardinal directions, North, East, South, and West (Rev. 7:2), and the earth as a whole (Rev. 20:9). There is no conflict between Revelation and science.

## Ten Examples of Scientific Statements in the Bible

1) Creation. Genesis 1:1 says, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." The beginning of the universe was not discovered by scientists until the twentieth century. It is now confirmed beyond any reasonable doubt. Nearly 4,000 years ago, the Bible got this right in its very first verse.

**Q:** If God created the universe, is there anything you can't trust Him with?

2) Light. Genesis 1:3 tells us that light was the first attribute of God's creation. An atheist theoretical physicist who won the Nobel Prize agrees, stating that in the beginning, "the universe was filled with light" and light "formed the dominant constituent of the universe."<sup>1</sup>

3) Life. Genesis 1:11, 21, 25, and 27 tell us God created life. Although natural process could account for some organic molecules, the idea that life evolved from non-living things (abiogenesis), is neither scientifically nor statistically possible. Just like the beginning of the universe, the beginning of life requires a Creator!

4) Biology. Genesis 1:11-12, 21, and 25 describe the biological principle that like begets like. The term "like" in Scripture can be understood as the Biological classification of family, like the cat family, dog family, etc. Although there can be adaptation within families, we don't see members evolving beyond them.<sup>2</sup>

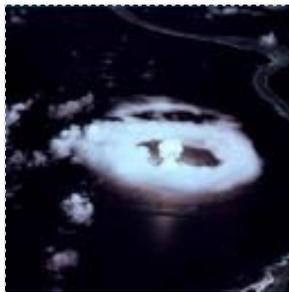
5) Adam and Eve. Genesis 1:26-2:25 tells us all humans trace back to one man and one woman. Genetics confirms that all humans come from one female ancestor, who is often referred to as Mitochondrial Eve, and that all males come from one male ancestor, who is often referred to as Y-chromosomal Adam.

6) The expansion of the universe. Psalm 104:2 adds, “he stretches out the heavens.” This continuing action of stretching out the heavens, the biblical word for the universe, is repeated often (Job 9:8, 26:7, Is. 40:22, 42:5, 44:24, 51:13, and Zec. 12:1). Hubble confirmed this scientific fact in the 1920’s. The continuing expansion of the universe is a fact described in Scripture and it is one of the pieces of evidence for the beginning of the universe, which confirms the need for a Creator.

7) The second law of thermodynamics. Psalm 102:26 , Isaiah 34:4-6, 51:6, and Hebrews 1:10-12 tell us the universe is wearing out like a garment. Science has confirmed that entropy, which can be commonly understood as disorder and randomness, is always increasing across the universe as a whole.

8) General Relativity. Psalm 90:4 describes the possibility of one segment of time being experienced either as a millennium, as a day, or as a few hours. 2 Peter 3:8 echoes this. Einstein’s theories of Relativity and modern scientific findings confirm time can be experienced differently by different observers.

**Q:** Should Christians debate the age of the universe with skeptics?



9) Radioactivity. 2 Peter 3:10 and 12 tell us that the elements will come apart with fire and destruction. The Greek word for element is stoicheion (στοιχεῖον) and it referred to any first thing or fundamental building block of other things. The word for destroy is the Greek word lyō (λύω) meaning to unbind. Even though the ancients didn’t understand atomic theory or radioactivity, Peter described the burning, melting, and destruction associated with the splitting of the building blocks of nature.

## Important Term

**Elements** are the fundamental building-blocks of matter. **Atoms** are the smallest units of matter and elements.

**Molecules** are groups of atoms that make up the physical universe.

10) The water cycle. Psalm 135:7, Job 36:27-29, and Ecclesiastes 1:7 describe the water cycle of evaporation and clouds, condensation and rain.

**Q:** Which of these scientific statements was most surprising to you?

## Talking Points

Scientific statements in Scripture are exciting but they aren't everything. These can help skeptics see that the Bible is divinely inspired but don't overemphasize these. Keep the main focus on Jesus and His resurrection.

## A Few Last Fun Facts

Tetrapodophis amplexus. Genesis 3:14, seems to imply that snakes originally had legs. Until recently there was no evidence of snakes with legs. In 2015, scientists reported the discovery of Tetrapodophis amplexus, which literally means "four-footed snake." It is not a lizard but an ancient snake that had four legs. Who knows how this type of creature might relate to the passage above? Whether there is a connection or not, it is an intriguing discovery.



Archaeopteryx. Gerald Schroeder explains how there is only one creature in all of the Bible that is described as a member of two separate animal families.<sup>4</sup> Tanshemeth is listed as a bird (owl, in Lev. 11:18) and a reptile (chameleon, in Lev. 11:30). This reptile-like bird, likely Archaeopteryx, is unique in the fossil record and unique in Scripture.<sup>3</sup>

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## Handling Disagreements

Science in the Bible is just one part of a broader, comprehensive case. These are just some of the scientific statements included in scripture. There are many others also. If these were the only reasons to believe the Bible, they'd still be worth considering. But there is so much more. The comprehensive case for the authority of Scripture is much greater and this is just one of the arguments for it.

## Convinced!



Isaac Newton is one of the most famous scientists of all time. He was a committed believer. He recognized that God was revealed in nature and necessary as its cause. He wrote, “Gravity explains the motions of the planets, but it cannot explain who set the planets in motion. God governs all things and knows all that is or can be done.”<sup>4</sup>

## Conclusion

Science can't prove God. It can, however, point to Him. In fact, science itself would not be possible without the predictability of a universe governed by God. The Bible isn't a scientific textbook but it does have scientific statements that show God's fingerprints on His word.

Some scientific facts in the Bible are more convincing than others. Some biblical statements, like the bendable nature of light (Ps. 104:2), seem scientific but could also just be poetic. Some might seem unscientific but are likely just poetic also. There are, however, scientific statements in the Bible that clearly describe God's knowledge of His creation. Things like the beginning of the universe and the beginning of life are irrefutable facts. And there are others we didn't have room to include here, like the beginning of time (1 Cor. 2:7).







# 11 REASONS TO REJECT OTHER WORLDVIEWS

## Reasons to Reject Other Worldviews – The TALL acronym

Jesus claimed that He alone was the way, the truth, and the life (Jn. 14:6). He said that others claiming to offer salvation “were thieves and robbers” (Jn. 10:8). No one else has ever demonstrated total power over death and no one else can offer us eternal life. Jesus claimed to be the only way. That’s because He is. The hope of eternal life is only found in Jesus. You can learn more about Jesus’ exclusivity in appendix F.

Jesus’ exclusive claims are not intended to alienate people but to explain to them the truth of reality so they can experience what only Jesus offers: salvation by grace and through faith. Jesus really is the only way. He tells us that for our own good because He wants everyone to be saved (1 Tim. 2:4, 2 Peter 3:9).

### Key Concept

The exclusivity of truth simply means that truth is true regardless of our opinions. Truth is always exclusive. Trying to deny that actually proves the point. For example, the statement that truth is not exclusive is an exclusive statement about truth and refutes itself. Truth is always exclusive. Two plus two is always four. Agreeing with truth is always best, regardless of our feelings about it. It doesn’t



## T – Theological Incoherence

Other worldviews are theologically incoherent.

Buddhism and Hinduism teach reincarnation, something that requires an infinite past, which is logically and scientifically impossible.<sup>1</sup> Also, the transcendent state of perfection that reincarnation is supposed to achieve (called moksha) has not been achieved so we know there hasn't been an infinite past.<sup>2</sup> Islam claims that if anyone “kills a soul ... it is as if he had slain mankind entirely” (Quran 5:32) yet commands followers to kill non-Muslims, idolaters, Christians, and Jews wherever they are found (8:12, 9:5, 29). The book of Mormon claims to agree with the Bible but has numerous conflicts with Scripture. It claims Jesus was born in Jerusalem (Alma 7:10) and that there will be marriage in heaven (contrary to Matt. 22:30). Atheism argues for God's non-existence, which is an absolute negation, a fallacy.

These perspectives are theologically incoherent and self-contradictory. The Bible is not.

**Q:** What can result from incoherent truth claims like the ones above?

## A – Ambiguous Truth Claims

Other worldviews make ambiguous truth claims.

Buddhism insists that desire is the root of all suffering yet claims that to overcome suffering, one must desire to follow the eightfold path. Islam claims that man was created from clay, from nothing, from water, from dust, from sperm, and from a blood clot (Sura 15:26, 19:67, 25:54, 30:20, 40:67, 96:1-2). Mormons and Jehovah's Witnesses make ambiguous claims about the nature of God (is He transcendent or

one of us), Jesus (is He the brother of Satan, Michael the Archangel, or someone else), people (will we live forever, will we be gods, or something else), marriage (is it eternal or not), and most importantly, salvation (is it through faith or works). Atheism is no less flawed, basing its merits in science although science could never disprove the supernatural.

These perspectives are ambiguous on fundamental issues. The Bible is not.

**Q:** How might ambiguous truth claims lead to problems?

## L – Lack of evidence

Other worldviews lack evidence and require a “leap of faith.”

Hinduism and Buddhism don’t claim to be based on actual evidence. Mormonism is clearly unhistoric. There is no evidence for the people groups it claims inhabited North America, the Nephites and Lamanites, nor that Native people in North America descended from Israelites (DNA and linguistics point to Asia). There is no evidence for the people, cities, wars, or events in the Book of Mormon. The Book of Mormon is also full of anachronisms (historical falsehoods). For example, certain grains, fruits, silk, steel, elephants, bees, horses, and other animals are mentioned in the Book of Mormon but didn’t exist in North America prior to Columbus. Finally, atheists assume God’s non-existence based on an incorrect assumption that there is no evidence for God. They rarely even try to offer evidence for God’s non-existence.

These perspectives lack evidence and require a leap of faith.



**Q:** How has Jesus transformed your life?

Learn to share your story. People can't deny what God has done in your life. Your testimony is good evidence for God and it is a great thing to share with people of other faiths. Use the Oasis World Ministries One Minute Witness worksheet appendix to prepare to share your story.

## Convinced!



Nabeel Qureshi was a former Muslim who came to know Jesus after researching the evidence for and against both Islam and Christianity. His book *Seeking Allah, Finding Jesus* describes his journey. His book, *No God but One: Allah or Jesus*, describes how to share the evidence for Christianity with Muslim friends.

## Conclusion

This was a very brief introduction to four reasons Christians can reject other faiths. Other worldviews are theologically incoherent, make ambiguous truth claims, lack evidence, and lack power to change lives. Other religions are all centered on what man can do for Himself. Jesus really did claim to be the only way to God. C. S. Lewis correctly stated that either Jesus was a liar, a lunatic, or Lord and God.<sup>2</sup> His life demonstrated he was neither a liar nor a lunatic. Every single person must consider the claim that He alone is Lord.

When you share the things you learned in this lesson, remember to do so in a gentle and respectful way. Don't forget that the person you are talking to is made in God's image and dearly loved by Him. Don't blow them out of the water. Be respectful and keep the focus on the evidence for our faith. Only Jesus conquered death and because of that we can be certain that only He has the authority to give us eternal life.

**Q:** Review the BEST FACTS and TALL TALES acronyms. Write them out in the margins and practice memorizing them.

**Q:** What are your top takeaways from this chapter?

**Q:** How did this chapter encourage you in your walk with God?

**Q:** How has this information emboldened you to share your faith?

## **Book Suggestion**

*How Is Christianity Different from Other Religions?* by John Ankerberg and Dillon Burroughs.







## A – The Apparatus (or mechanism) of Evolution is Insufficient

An apparatus is a term that describes the system or structure needed for a task. We'll use it to describe the mechanism of evolution. The proposed mechanism of evolution involves natural selection working on gradual, positive, information-creating mutations. This has never been supported by science.



Natural selection happens when an environment is better suited for one member of a species over another. For example, imagine a population of mice living in a brown house. Let's say 90% are white and 10% are brown. Now, imagine the homeowners adopt a pet cat!

**Q:** How would the 90% white and 10% brown population change?

The white mice would be spotted and eaten which would lead to a larger percentage of brown mice. That is natural selection. It doesn't create or add anything new. Evolutionists often use the terms "natural selection" and "evolution" as synonyms claiming that examples of natural selection are examples of evolution. They are not. Natural selection is a fact, evolution is not.

This is where mutations come in. For evolution to occur, positive mutations must create fundamentally new features. Positive mutations are very rare and their benefits always come from losing something that was already there, never by gaining something fundamentally new. For example, a mouse might have a

positive mutation that makes it smaller so it can better evade a cat but it will never have a mutation that gives it something fundamentally new, like wings. Positive mutations that give a species fundamentally new features don't happen. Without that, evolution can't either. For more on this, read Dr. Michael Behe's books *The Edge of Evolution* and *Darwin Devolves*.

**Q:** Gould called the traditional mechanism of evolution "...effectively dead despite its persistence as textbook orthodoxy."<sup>2</sup> What do you think?

## **L – Life Can't Arise from Non-life**

If atheism and naturalism were true, evolution would have to account for a naturalistic start for life. It does not. In chapter three, we told you that even if all the right organic molecules were naturally formed in the same place and at the same time, the odds of getting them to align correctly would be something like 1 in  $10^{112,827}$ .<sup>3</sup> That is impossible! There is no adequate, natural explanation for the beginning of life. Life is far too complex to have come from non-life.

## **The Skeptic's Smokescreen.**

Evolutionists often try to get out of statistics by appealing to a multiverse. The multiverse is purely hypothetical and can't be observed or tested. But, since it assumes an infinite number of universes, atheists will insist that in an infinite number of universes even odds like 1 in  $10^{112,827}$  will happen somewhere. That's as big a leap of faith as you'll find. The most famous atheist evolutionist of our time calls it luck.<sup>4</sup> We call it a smokescreen.

## **E – Existence of Information and Design**

Even if we assumed the right organic molecules could form spontaneously and align correctly, against all odds, they still wouldn't carry the information needed for life. They'd be like empty flash drives. The building blocks of life (RNA and DNA) are much more than chemical structures, they are information laden blueprints. The information they hold can't be explained naturalistically. Neither can the incredible fine tuning of this universe. Remember what we learned in chapter 3. The engineering of the universe, including the information and design we see throughout it, points to God.

## **S – Start of the Universe from Nothing**

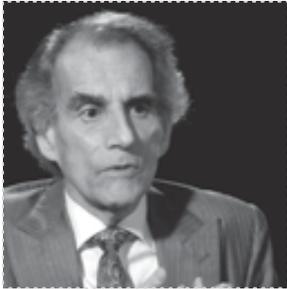
The beginning of the universe from nothing is now a commonly accepted, scientifically confirmed fact (remember chapter 2). Not only is science unable to provide a naturalistic explanation for this, science actually points us to the truth that a cause is required for this. Science leads us to God. Atheism and naturalistic evolution cannot explain the start of the universe.

**Q:** How does the start of the universe point to God (remember chapter 2)?

## **Key Concept**

Evolution has been called the only game in town. People who assume there is no God will ignore the evidence for God in order to craft a theory that conforms with an anti-supernatural bias. People don't follow science to evolution, they ignore science and statistics to keep evolution.

## Convinced!



David Berlinski is a philosopher, mathematician, biochemist, and renowned intellectual who has publicly denied the possibility of naturalistic evolution. Although not a Christian, he has been intellectually honest enough to expose the fraudulent claims of Darwinian evolution. Naturalistic evolution defies statistical possibility and basic principles of science.

## A Note on Theistic Evolution

Don't confuse old-earth creationists with theistic evolutionists. They are different. Old-earth creationists believe in the authority of the Bible and acknowledge that the evidence for an old universe is not incompatible with Scripture. A large percentage of Christian apologists are old-earth creationists.

Many people who embrace theistic evolution, the idea that God inspired evolution, seem to do so because it is more popular in today's atheistic environment. But, if science doesn't support it and if the Bible doesn't clearly teach it, why would we believe it? Evolution is the foundation of the atheistic paradigm that has done so much bad in the world. Christians should be wary of adopting theistic evolution to gain the approval of a broken society. We believe that people were created in the image of God, for a relationship with God, to do the will of God, and to spend eternity with God. The world needs believers who will stand up for that truth and not waffle on it.

## Handling Disagreements

This topic is full of minefields. Be sensitive! Remember to show love and respect

to fellow believers, whether they are theistic evolutionists, old-earth creationists, or young earth creationists. (more on this in appendix C). Do the same with non-Christians and keep the gospel and the evidence for your faith the focus with them. Try not to get sucked into debates on fringe issues.

**Q:** How can you respect others who might disagree with you on these topics?

## Conclusion

As with the TALL acronym, use the TALES acronym arguments sparingly but be ready to refer to them if needed. If you have doubts about this topic or if someone you're sharing with really needs answers, be ready to share the TALES acronym information in a respectful way.

Faith and science are not at odds and evolution is not a fact of science. You can be confident in your faith and you can trust that the same God who created the universe is walking with you each and every day!

**Q:** Review the BEST FACTS and TALL TALES acronyms. Write them out in the margins and practice memorizing them.

**Q:** What are your top takeaways from this chapter?





# 13

# SUMMARY

## Summary

Jesus called us to shine brightly for Him (Matt. 5:14-16). We put together the BEST FACTS and TALL TALES acronyms to encourage you in your faith and to equip you to share your faith. Others need these facts! We hope you'll take some time to memorize each of these points so you can use them to encourage fellow believers in their faith and to help point nonbelievers to the truth.

Many of the people who walk past you every day have heard lie after lie, to the point that they don't know what is true or if there is any truth at all. God has invited us to take part in His Great Commission, reaching out to the lost, helping rescue and restore them into a loving relationship with Jesus.

## Talking Points

The BEST FACTS tract is a great way to share the evidence. You can get it at [greatcommissionalliance.org/shop](http://greatcommissionalliance.org/shop). This tract was designed for skeptics. It is colorful, engaging, and very easy to use conversationally. Always share the evidence for your faith with gentleness and respect. Don't use these facts to bash others or belittle them. These truths are not a club meant to harm, they are a map meant to guide people to the truth and to give hope and comfort to those who feel anxious and uncertain. Above all else, follow the Holy Spirit; only He knows what will make a difference in another person's heart.



**F** – The Bible Foretells the future. The Bible has hundreds of fulfilled prophecies. No other religious book comes close. You can trust the Bible.

**A** – The Bible is Archaeologically accurate. From King David to Alexander the Great, archaeological discoveries validate Scripture. You can trust the Bible.

**C** – The Bible is Coherent. The Bible was written over the course of two millennia by more than 40 people from different cultures and backgrounds. Still, its diverse authors agree with each other and what they wrote aligns with reality! You can trust the Bible.

**T** – The Bible has been Transmitted correctly. The Bible is by far the most accurately preserved ancient book. Thousands of manuscripts confirm what the original authors wrote. You can trust the Bible.

**S** – The Bible is Scientifically accurate. Many biblical statements written thousands of years ago have been verified by science. You can trust the Bible.

**Q:** How should the knowledge that the Bible comes from the magnificent Creator of the universe affect the way we view it?

## The Skeptic's Smokescreen

Skeptics often say, “there’s no evidence for Christianity.” That’s a classic smokescreen. There is a wealth of evidence for our faith. The BEST FACTS outlines some of it. There are numerous other logical arguments and many other types of evidence too. In addition to all of that, billions of lives have been transformed by Jesus over the centuries; each one evidence for Him. Instead of wrestling with the evidence, many skeptics ignore it. Even if we didn’t have evidence, that wouldn’t mean their positions were true. But, we do have evidence, more evidence by far than any other worldview.

## A Summary of the TALL TALES

The TALL TALES acronyms give you good ways to answer people with different worldviews. Use the TALL acronym if someone asks why you won't consider other religions. Use the TALES acronym if someone argues that evolution disproves all faiths. Whoever you might be talking with, be careful and sensitive with these arguments. Only use them when you know doing so won't put the person you are talking with on the defensive. Do not use them condescendingly or to pick theological fights. Keep focused on the evidence for your faith and only use these arguments sparingly and respectfully.

**T** – Other worldviews are Theologically incoherent. Unlike the Bible, many of their statements don't add up. Other religions don't match up to the Bible.

**A** – Other worldviews make Ambiguous truth claims. Many of their statements aren't clear on critical topics like history, morality, and salvation. Other religions don't match up to the Bible.

**L** – Other worldviews Lack evidence and require a “leap of faith.” They recount history incorrectly and make statements that modern archaeological discoveries disprove. Other religions don't match up to the Bible.

**L** – Other worldviews Lack the power to change lives. They focus on the need to try harder to become better, and add more burdens than relief. Christianity is the only worldview where God saves people and changes them from the inside out. Other religions don't match up to the Bible.

**Q:** We hope these facts have inspired you to share with the people all around you. How will you use the evidence of how God has changed your life (see appendix A) to share with others?



significant but when you add them all together they make up a comprehensive case. Jesus is real, He is alive, and you can trust Him.

**Q:** Why is a comprehensive case for our faith so significant?

## Convinced!



Lee Strobel was an atheist and an award-winning legal editor at The Chicago Tribune. After his wife became a Christian, he set out to disprove her faith. He applied the techniques that he used as an investigative journalist to disprove Christianity. As he began sifting through the evidence for God, the resurrection, and the reliability of the Bible, he became convinced by the comprehensive case for Christ and put his trust in Jesus. One of his most popular books, *The Case for Christ*, has also been made

into a movie. We hope you'll check out both of those and the rest of his books too!

## Conclusion

We hope you enjoyed the BEST FACTS! Please memorize the BEST FACTS and TALL TALES acronyms and a brief summary of the evidence for each. Don't forget the appendices! We have included important information in each appendix that will prepare you for many of the questions you will encounter. Remember the BEST FACTS tract too; it will help you share this evidence with friends, relatives, neighbors, co-workers, and others.





# APPENDICES

## **Video Training**

[thebestfacts.com/videos](http://thebestfacts.com/videos)



# Appendix A

## The One Minute Witness

We hope you will share your faith often. This Oasis World Ministries One Minute Witness worksheet will help you prepare for that.

1) Permission.

Simply walk up to someone and ask, "May I ask you a question?" If they say yes, ask, "What is the best thing that has ever happened to you?" Listen, smile, ask a few follow up questions, and then ask, "May I share the best thing that has ever happened to me?" If they say, "yes," continue.

2) B.C. - Describe your life before Christ.

Finish this sentence with three words that describe who you were before Christ:  
"There was a time in my life when \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_ defined me."

3) T.P. - What was your turning point?

How did you hear about Jesus? Summarize the Gospel (God's love, your sin, Jesus' payment, and your decision) and how you responded to it. Finish this sentence:  
"and then one day..."

Conclude your T.P. by finishing this: “When I realized Jesus died for my sins and rose again, I invited Him to...”

4) A.D. - Describe your life after trusting Christ.

Finish this sentence with three positive benefits you have experienced; use antonyms of the previous three: “Since I met Jesus \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_”

5) If I had never met Jesus. Consider what your life would look like without Jesus and then finish this: “If I had never met Jesus ... but because of Him...”

Now, practice saying it all together until it feels natural. Our OMW video training will help (Great Commission Alliance Media on YouTube). After you share your testimony, ask someone if they would like to put their trust in Jesus. Ask them if they are ready to A) Admit they are a sinner and need a Savior, B) Believe Jesus died for their sins and rose again, and C) Confess Jesus alone as Savior and Lord. If so, lead them in a prayer of faith. Help get them started in discipleship with our [growingwithJesus.com](http://growingwithJesus.com) site or resources (many are listed in the back of this book).

Get more info at [oneminutewitness.org](http://oneminutewitness.org). As you share your faith, you may encounter objections. The next appendices will prepare you for that.

# Appendix B

## The Problem of Evil, Pain and Suffering

The problem of evil, pain and suffering goes back millennia and it is one of the most common objections Christians are faced with. The basic accusation is that a good, all-powerful God would eliminate suffering but since suffering exists, He is either not all-powerful or not good. We're going to give you a few basic ways to address this issue.

First of all, everyone has to answer the question of the problem of evil. Atheists hold evil as evidence of God's non-existence but fail to realize that outside of an objective moral standard, there is no real good or evil (remember the moral argument for God's existence from lesson 4). Other non-Christian worldviews are equally unable to answer the question. Christianity offers a coherent answer and hope in the midst of pain and suffering.

Just like darkness is the absence of light, evil is the failure to measure up to who God is and His standard of right and wrong. The Bible calls this sin. God created the universe and people with free wills and the potential for sin and evil, but He did not create evil. God created us for a relationship with Him and gave us the freedom to choose to follow Him or not. Not following Him results in evil. Sin is the cause of all the moral evil on the planet. Things like theft, rape, and murder are sin. Sin is also the original cause of all natural evil; diseases, natural disasters, and the like are a consequence of humanity's sin and a universe that is now in decay. Additionally, Satan is real and he is an architect of untold evil (Jn. 10:10). God does not cause evil, sinful beings do when they disobey God.

Although God does not cause evil, He can allow certain expressions of it in order to bring about a greater eternal good. God can allow evil to demonstrate the urgency of salvation, to get people's attention, and for other reasons. He is patiently waiting for people, both perpetrators and victims of evil, to find Him (2 Peter 3:9). As Christians, we also realize that justice will prevail! All evil will be

dealt with, either at the Cross or in hell. All evil will be punished.

As believers we have hope in the midst of suffering. Romans 8:28 promises that God will turn evil and pain around for the believer's good and God's purposes. Additionally, we know God is working towards an eternal purpose that transcends all our present suffering. God can allow temporary suffering to bring more people into an eternity with Him. In the grand scheme of things, that's really, really good!

A tapestry analogy has been used to illustrate this. From one side, a tapestry can look like a tangled mess, while from the other side, it is seen as a beautiful work of art. From eternity, we will see why God allowed the evil He allowed on this planet and we will see the beautiful tapestry of His work in history.

Everyone has been hurt and everyone will be hurt again. It is natural to ask "why" questions when we encounter pain and suffering. If someone brings up the problem of evil as an intellectual rebuttal to your faith, feel free to walk them through the things we just shared. However, if someone brings this up because they are struggling with doubt because of pain they have experienced, realize you'll need to approach this a little differently.

Apologetical answers can fall short of addressing the pain hurting people are experiencing. When you encounter someone who is wrestling with the problem of evil, pain, and suffering in a personal way, be careful to approach the problem with that in mind. Don't offer an intellectual response that fails to address someone's emotional needs. Reach out to the hurting, mourn with them, serve them, sympathize with them, and love them. Focus on the hope available in Christ while they are experiencing pain.

## **Book Suggestions**

*The Problem of Pain* by C. S. Lewis

*Why Does God Allow Evil* by Clay Jones.

# Appendix C

## The Age of the Universe

Many features of the universe seem to imply that it is old but Scripture can seem to indicate it is young. Any appearance of conflict between the two is always due to a misunderstanding of one or the other. Salvation is not based on this (Jn. 3:16, Eph. 2:8-9) and Bible-believing Christians can have different opinions on this. Don't alienate unbelievers or attack believers over this issue.

In many ways, the universe appears old. Thousands of cross-dated tree rings,<sup>1</sup> hundreds of thousands of ice core layers,<sup>2</sup> millions of sedimentary layers,<sup>3</sup> light from billions of light years away, and countless similar findings give the appearance of thousands, millions, and even billions of years of age. These are facts of the physical universe, not hidden arguments for evolution.

The Bible's genealogies seem to imply a younger time-frame. But, before we just add them up, we must read genealogical passages how the authors intended them to be read. Biblical genealogies perfectly describe important elements of Israel's history and Jesus' ancestry, but whether or not they provide an exact timeline is less certain. We must stay humble. The Bible warns us that arguing about genealogies is not helpful (1 Timothy 1:4, Titus 3:9).

Biblical writers used key terms differently than we do. For example, words like father and son could be used literally or in multigenerational ways (ex. Matt. 1:1, 2, 3:9). The Hebrew word Yalad, often translated "begat," was also used in multigenerational ways (ex. compare Gen. 11:12 and Lk. 3:35-36). Another example describes multiple generations of Jacob's descendants with this word (Gen. 46:15-25). The word generation could be used in different ways. So could the word Yowm, translated as day (Gen. 1) but also as different expanses of time (Ps. 90:4).

There are also gaps in the Bible's genealogies. A few examples include gaps of six generations (1 Chr. 6:3-15 and Ez. 7:1-5), three generations (1 Chr. 3:11-12 and Mat. 1:8),

and four centuries between Moses, Aaron, and their grandfather Kohath (Gen. 46:8,11, Ex. 6:18, 20).

There are other reasons to avoid dogmatic perspectives. Time can be experienced differently by different observers. This is a scientific reality and a biblical truth (Ps. 90:4, 2 Peter 3:8). Science and the Bible also tell us that our universe is expanding (Job 9:8, 26:7, Psalm 104:2, Is. 40:22, 42:5, 44:24, 51:12-13, and Zec. 12:1). Physicist Gerald Schroeder has shown that due to the actual expansion of space and time, something that only took six literal days in the distant past would be measured as billions of years old today.<sup>4</sup>

Many people wrongly assume that an old universe implies evolution. It does not. No amount of time can salvage the theory of evolution. Don't confuse old-earth creationists and evolutionists; they are not the same.

Dr. Wayne Grudem encourages us to focus on defending the evidence for the beginning of the universe rather than less persuasive arguments about a younger age and to treat Bible-believing Christians that hold different perspectives on the age of the universe with love and respect.<sup>5</sup> Whatever your view, hold it with humility, treat others with love and respect, and keep focused on the strongest evidence and the truth of the gospel.

## Book Suggestion

*Seven Days That Divide the World: The Beginning According to Genesis and Science* by John Lennox.

<sup>1</sup> Davidson and Wolgemuth (2019), <https://biologos.org/articles/cross-checking-dating-methods-tree-rings-varves-and-carbon-14>, retrieved 9/23/2020. <sup>2</sup> <https://icecores.org/about-ice-cores>, retrieved 9/23/2020. <sup>3</sup> Bradley, W. H. The varves and climate of the Green River epoch: U.S. Geol. Survey Prof. Paper 158, pp 87-110, 1929. <sup>4</sup> Schroeder, The Science of God, p. 63, <sup>5</sup> Wayne Grudem, Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine, p. 308.

# Appendix D

## What About Those Who Haven't Heard

Two millennia after Christ, more than 40% of the world remains unreached.<sup>1</sup> Many have never heard the Gospel. We are often asked, "How can God send innocent people who have never heard the gospel to hell?" Let's answer that.

First of all, there are no innocent people. Every person is a sinner who rightly deserves God's punishment (Rom. 3:23, 6:23). We also know that salvation is found only in Jesus (Acts 4:12). God has determined the times and places that people live so they'll reach out and find Him (Acts 17:26-27). He strategically places people in areas and situations that will push them to search for Him. He is kindly drawing all people to Himself (Jn. 12:32-33, Rom. 2:4) and promises to reveal Himself to all who respond by searching for Him (Dt. 4:29, Pr. 8:17, Jer. 29:13, Matt. 7:7-8, Lk. 11:9-10) and even to some who don't (Is. 65:1).

For those that search, He will always make a way for them to find Him. He often sends missionaries. We hope you'll join Him in His mission to seek and to save the lost (Lk. 19:10). He may give a seeker an opportunity to hear the gospel online or in print. He might even use a less traditional approach, like giving them a dream or a vision. This is happening with Muslims across the world.<sup>2</sup> No one who searches for Jesus will be left without an opportunity to find Him. No one who refuses to search for Jesus will have an excuse.

A related question is, "what about children who die before they can trust Christ?" There are vague allusions to an age of accountability but these aren't clear and don't address salvation (Num. 14:29, 32:11). Millard Erikson reminds us that David was sure he would see his child who had died (2 Sam. 12:23) and Jesus elevated children as examples of those who would be saved (Matt. 18:3, 19:14).<sup>3</sup> We can trust God with the question of children who haven't heard.

As you consider this issue, remember God's love and justice. You can trust Him. God will often give people what they need to cause them to search but not so much that they'll be judged if they don't. People will be judged more severely based on what they know (Rom. 2:12-16). This is one reason Jesus spoke in parables, so that those whose hearts were soft could understand and so that those who were unwilling to repent would not (Matt. 13:13). God is a loving God who wants all to be saved and none to perish (1 Tim. 2:4, 2 Peter 3:9).

The most important question is not, "what about those who haven't heard," but, "what about those who have?" Always come back to that question.

## Book Suggestion

*The Finishers* by Weimer and Hershey.

## References

1 <https://joshuaproject.net/global/progress>, retrieved 9/24/20, 2 Garrison, A Wind In The House Of Islam, Kindle, loc. 3435, 3 Erikson, Christian Theology, Second Edition, p. 654.

# Appendix E

## Responding to LGBTQ+ Questions

This objection often comes up in evangelism. If you come across it, be sensitive and caring. Try to stay focused on the gospel. You could say something like, “I’m not saying I’m better than anyone else. I’m just a sinner that found forgiveness, significance, hope, and eternal life in Jesus. I want everyone else to find Jesus too.” Or you could ask, “Will this lifestyle give you eternal life?” Then continue with the gospel. Let them know that only Jesus can give us eternal life and keep focused on Him. These lifestyles hurt people in many different ways and helping them find freedom in Christ is one of the most loving things we can do. If you have to discuss this more, follow Brady’s advice below.

Brady Cone, of Calibrate Ministries, authored the rest of this appendix. You can learn more about Calibrate Ministries, support Brady’s important work, or schedule him to speak at [calibrateministries.com](http://calibrateministries.com).

I was a college student at Chadron State, and I was living a homosexual lifestyle. I had struggled with these issues from a young age and thought I was trapped in that lifestyle. Coming to know Christ changed everything! Jesus gave me another choice: a life of holiness through Him. Leaving behind a world of homosexuality was the most difficult thing that I have ever done, but through it, God has given me new life and freedom in ways I never dreamed. My goal is to share my testimony and the power of the Gospel in my life, and in turn, provide discipleship, insight, and written material to equip the church in discussing these matters.

When engaging with someone who identifies as LGBTQ or dealing with same sex attraction (SSA), it is paramount that we speak of these issues with compassion, grace, and nuance. These are complicated issues, which require in-depth answers that are more than just theological talking points. We must minister to the heart and soul of the individual. We have a lot to cover.

## Six Important Principles

1) Is this person a believer? If someone isn't a believer, then they can't be expected to live a biblical life. At this point, the conversation is about way more than just sexuality. Even if we were to convince them that homosexuality was a sin, they don't have the power of the Holy Spirit inside of them to change. If they were to muster up the strength to deny themselves for a while, that still does nothing for their soul. The point: They need Jesus. Stay focused on the Gospel.

2) Is this person a professing believer? If so, that is where we may have the spiritual authority to hold them accountable to biblical truth (Col 3:16, Luke 17:3). One question to get to the bottom of: Do they believe that the Bible is the authoritative Word of God? If not, that is the place to start. It is futile to try to convince them that the handful of places in the Bible which speak of homosexuality have authority if they don't believe that all of Scripture has authority.

3) Help build a bigger picture: What is this person's view on marriage? Why do they believe that God created marriage? What is marriage supposed to be a reflection of? Hint: It is supposed to be a reflection of Christ and His Church, and how He laid down His life for her (Eph 5:21). In summary, don't just try to teach them what they should not be doing. Teach them that God has a much better plan with a much better design for marriage.

4) Level the playing field: We live in a world that is so confused about sexuality, marriage, and desire. Many times, the same idolatry at the root of same sex attraction and LGBTQ relationships can be at the heart of heterosexual attraction and marriage. We live in a culture that has made marriage all about ourselves. We love a person for how they make us feel, which is really self-love and not the love that Jesus calls us to (laying down your life for another). The idolatry of looking to another person to find value, hope, and wholeness is prevalent in relationships and sexual desire all around us, including in heterosexuality, both outside and inside the church. The foundation of so much sexual and emotional desire comes from a

place of idolatry, it is just the object of that idolatry that is different. Level the playing field by drawing out your similarities. Show them the areas where you also have needed repentance from finding your hope from a person instead of from Christ.

5) Have the right expectations. An LGBTQ individual has taken years or decades to come to where they are at. There has probably been heartache, wrestling, and pain. There is layer upon layer of sin, doubts, misbelief, trauma, and hard-heartedness. Not all of that is going to be untangled, healed, and corrected overnight. Long term discipleship helps lead them to truth and healing one step at a time.

6) Theology: We must be prepared to explain proper theology. People in the LGBTQ community, and their allies, often hold to what is known as “revisionist theology.” This line of thinking takes biblical texts and twists them to say, “that text is not referring to homosexuality as we practice it today.”

One example is 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 which states, “Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God” (ESV). The Greek word translated, “men who practice homosexuality” or simply “homosexual offenders” in other translations, is arsenokoitai. Revisionist theology attempts to claim that this word is referring to pedophilia, which was a common practice during the first century. They use this argument to claim that Paul is not writing about a consensual homosexual relationship. However, biblical scholars and linguists are confident that adult, same-sex relations did exist in the first century, and it was those consensual relationships that were described when Paul used the word arsenokoitai.

Another example of revisionist theology attempting to change the meaning of Scripture is in Romans 1:26-27 which states, “For this reason God gave them up to

dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature; and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error” (ESV). Revisionist theology claims that the “natural relations” that this passage refers to are not those of modern-day homosexuality. They claim that “unnatural relations” happen when adults have sexual relations with the same gender even though they are not attracted to that gender. Therefore, two men having sexual relations or two women having sexual relations in our current times is not unnatural for them because they have sexual attraction for each other.

This can easily be disputed, however, by looking at the entire context of the chapter. Romans 1:25 states, “because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator...” (ESV). Speaking of believing these lies, Paul wrote, “For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature.” The passion they had for one another (of the same gender) was a result of “trading God’s truth for a lie.” The desires themselves were unnatural, a product of sin, and the result of rejecting God’s created order.

In order to reach people who are LGBTQ, or who believe in LGBTQ theology, we must identify the lies that they believe. And in God’s grace, He can shine the light of truth on their hearts and help them trade those lies for His truth.

## **Addressing Common Presuppositions**

When engaging with an LGBTQ person or their allies, they often make the argument that people with same-sex attraction are born that way. They assume that if someone is born with same-sex attraction, then acting upon it must be okay. Responding to this question requires nuance and compassion. Here are several points I like to make when responding to this:

There is no evidence that people are born with same-sex desires. Studies show that sexual desire is fluid, develops over time, and can change over time. However, a common stumbling block in this conversation is how strongly a person feels like they were born with SSA. Even though it is strongly shown in scientific and psychological studies that people are not born with sexual desire, I have found that people strongly think that they are. This is not a “hill to die on” and not usually a fruitful debate. It is going to take a great work of the Holy Spirit to show them otherwise, and they probably will not be convinced in the moment. Sexual and emotional desire is complex and will take years and decades for them to work through and to discover how theirs developed.

A much better way to engage with them is with this truth: We are all born into sin, and we are all called to deny ourselves. Just because something feels natural, does not mean that it is good. We are all sinners, and God set boundaries because he wants the best for us. Part of the Christian life is denying ourselves of the desires that feel natural. So whether or not someone is born with SSA becomes a moot point in light of our response to the gospel.

Caution: In this conversation, we need to be careful about how we use the word “choice.” Many times, Christians have presented a false dichotomy: they have believed that if a person is not born with SSA then it must be a choice. This is a false dichotomy, as people rarely consciously choose to struggle with a specific sin issue or desire. Our heterosexual brothers and sisters did not wake up one day and choose to be attracted to the opposite sex in a way that was going to lead to lust and possible behavior that we would call sin. In the same way, the people around us with SSA did not usually choose those desires. Yes, they may have made choices that allowed those desires to fester and grow, much like we do with all temptation and sin issues. But accusing them of choosing SSA is a roadblock that will instantly shut down conversation and show that one does not understand these issues.

People don’t usually get to choose which sin issues and inclinations their hearts will struggle with and be captivated by. What one does have the ability to choose

is their behavior and response to those desires. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, God gives people the ability to deny themselves.

A common response to the Christian sexual ethic is the belief that expecting someone to deny themselves and possibly "not love the person they want to love" is not only unrealistic, it is cruel. This shows how much our society has put its hope in marriage and relationships (and Christians are just as guilty). Paint a picture of the two alternatives and help them understand which is more freeing: putting our hope in another person and relying on them for our happiness and value, or placing our eternal hope in the God of the universe who is all powerful and loves us more than we can imagine. Which one of those options is going to lead to peace and freedom?

We hope you learned a lot from Brady. Always remember to stay focused on Jesus and the gospel. One good reminder that we have heard is that we aren't trying to convert people to heterosexuality but to Jesus. Remember to authentically love your LGBTQ+ friends, co-workers, neighbors, and relatives. Show them that you truly care about them. Don't blow your witness by coming across as arrogant or uncaring. Help them find Jesus and trust Him to work in their lives in His timing. Please visit [calibrateministries.com](http://calibrateministries.com) for more from Brady Cone.

## Book Suggestion

*Can You Be Gay and Christian?* by Michael Brown.

# Appendix F

## The Exclusivity of Christ

Truth is always exclusive. Denying that actually proves it. Statements like “there is no truth,” a claim that purports to be true, “there are no absolutes,” an absolute statement, and “you can’t know anything for sure,” a belief that is sure of itself, are all self-refuting.<sup>1</sup> Two plus two is always four, never five. Gravity is a law of reality, regardless of your opinions about it. Truth is always exclusive.

Jesus claimed to be the way, the truth, and the life and that no one could be saved apart from Him (Jn. 14:6). We can’t reject this claim because it is exclusive; all truth claims are. We must evaluate it to determine if it is true. Jesus’ life, ministry, death, and resurrection are facts that justify Jesus’ claims.

Jesus’ exclusive claims are meant to save not to separate. A good doctor will prescribe a life saving-medication and insist their patients refrain from false remedies. Jesus does the same because He wants everyone to be saved (1 Tim. 2:4, 2 Peter 3:9). Only Jesus has total power over death. Only He can give us eternal life. He tells us this to rescue us from an eternity apart from Him.

History is full of false hopes. The Egyptians built pyramids, the first emperor of China took mercury tablets, and some people today are having their bodies cryogenically frozen, all hoping to achieve immortality. Apart from Christ, all other hopes are just as futile. Jesus conquered death. Only He can give eternal life.

## Book Suggestion

More Than a Carpenter by Josh D. McDowell and Sean McDowell.

## References

<sup>1</sup> Gregory Koukl, *Tactics*, 10th Anniversary Edition, P. 144–146

# About the Authors



Brandon and Anne Cox (far left) helped with the original BEST FACTS content.

Chris and Michelle Kachuriak (third couple from left) helped with content and editing.

Jesse Denison (center) did too.

Ben and Meghan Renfro (third couple from right) were instrumental in this. Ben helped with writing and Meghan did all the design and layout.

Philip Pohlman (to the Renfro's right) helped with writing.

Nate (PhD) and Erin (MA) Herbst, far right, helped with writing as well. Nate was the primary author on this project.

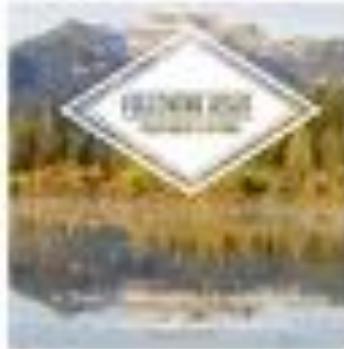
Grant Bresett and Caitlin Craft (not pictured) helped earlier on as well.

Finally, Brady Cone, of Calibrate Ministries, did the appendix on LGBTQ+ issues.

# GCA Resources



The **BEST FACTS** tract is a great resource for skeptics. It provides solid scientific, logical, and historical arguments. If you loved this book, get these tracts!



The **Following Jesus** workbook is a great tool for one-on-one discipleship or for Bible study growth groups. It covers the fundamentals of the Christian walk in a simple, biblical, relational way.



**101 Easy, Effective and Exciting Evangelism Ideas** is a short little book with a ton of practical evangelism ideas.



**Every Day Impact** is a 31-day devotional designed to encourage believers in personal evangelism.



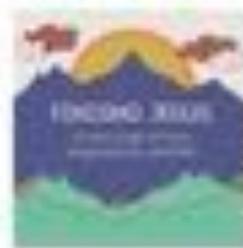
**Great Commission Leadership** is a comprehensive ministry training workbook, focusing on character development and ministry skills.



The **One Year Discipleship** tool covers everything you need for basic, biblical discipleship. It is available for free in many languages!



The **Exponential Harvest** training is a practical template for multiplying ministries.



The **Finding Jesus** tract is a gospel tract that uses Jesus' direct quotes. This is a great resource for evangelism.

Get these resources and others at [greatcommissionalliance.org/shop](http://greatcommissionalliance.org/shop)



